

CLOSE UP

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CLOSE UP

Vol. VIII No. 2

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THE DINAMIC SQUARE

(CONCLUSION).

This article is based on the speech made by S. M. Eisenstein during a discussion on "Wide Film" in Relation to Motion Picture Production Technique at a meeting organised by the Technicians Branch of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, in conjunction with the Directors and Producers Branches, Fox Hills Studio, Hollywood. The first part of this article appeared in our March issue.

Remains the last argument—the economic.

The horizontally extended form corresponds most closely to the shape left for the eye by the balcony overhanging the back of the parterre, and by the series of balconies each overhanging the other. The absolute possible limit of screen height in these conditions is estimated by Sponable (2) as 23 feet to every 46 of horizontal possibilities.

If we are to remain governed by strictly economic considerations—we might well allow that by using vertical compositions we should oblige the public to move to the more expensive forward seats free of overhanging balconies. . .

But another fact comes to our rescue—and this is the unfitness of the present shape and proportions of the cinema theatre of to-day for *sound purposes*.

Acoustics help optics!

I have not the time to examine references in looking up the ideal proportions for a sound theatre.

I faintly recall from my dim and distant past study of architecture that, in theatre and concert buildings, the vertical cut should, for optimum acoustics, be parabolic.

What I do remember clearly is the shape and the typical proportions of two ideal buildings. One ideal for optical display.

Let us take the Roxy (New York).

And one for auditive display.

The Salle Pleyel in Paris—the peak acoustic perfection hitherto attained in a concert hall.

They are *exactly* opposed in proportions to each other. If The Salle Pleyel were to lay upon its side it would become a Roxy. If the Roxy were to stand upright it would become a Salle Pleyel. Every proportion of the Roxy split horizontally into parterres and balconies opposes itself directly to the strictly vertical, receding into depth, corridor-like Salle Pleyel.

The sound film—the intersection of optic and auditive display, will have to synthesise in the shape of its display hall, both tendencies with equal force.

In the days to come the sound theatre will have to be reconstructed. And its new shape—in intersecting the horizontal and vertical tendencies of “ye olden Roxy” and “ye olden Pleyel” for these new coming days conditioned by a mingling of an optic and acoustic perception—will be the one most perfectly appropriate to the dynamic square screen and its display of vertical and horizontal affective impulses.*

And now, last but not least, I must energetically defy one more creeping tendency that has partially triumphed over the talkies and which now stretches out its unclean hands towards the Grandeur film, hastening to force it, in yet greater degree, to kneel subservient to its base desires. This is the tendency entirely to smother the principles of montage, already weakened by the 100 per cent. talkies, which yet wait for the first powerful example of the perfectly cut and constructed sound film that will establish anew the montage principle as the basic, everlasting, and vital principle of cinematographic expression and creation.

I refer to innumerable quotations, quotations partially accepted even by such great masters of the screen as my friend Vidor and the Great Old Man of all of us—D. W. Griffith. For example :

“ . . . Dance scenes need no longer be “ followed ” as there is ample room in a normal long shot for all the lateral movement used in most dances. . . ”

(The “ moving camera ” is a means of affecting in the spectator a specific dynamic feeling, and not a means of investigation or following dancing girl feet ! See the rocking movement of the camera in the reaping scene of *Old and New* and the same with the machine gun in *All Quiet on the Western Front*.—S.E.)

“ . . . Close-ups can be made on the wide film. Of course, it is not necessary to get as close as you do with the 35 mm. camera, but, comparatively speaking, you can make the same size of close-up. . . ”

(The impressive value of a close-up lies not at all in its absolute size, but entirely in its size relation to the optical affective impulse produced by the dimension of the previous and following shots.—S.E.)

* The actual reconstruction and readjustment of the now existing theatres, to adapt them to new forms of screen, would cost (considered entirely independently of the artistic value consequent upon any given kind of adaption) by estimate of the experts of the Motion Picture Academy, about \$40,000,000. But mechanical genius has found a way out. By the method of first taking the picture on 65 mm. Grandeur negative. Reducing it so as to confine it where desired to the limits of a 35 m.m. positive (not covering the whole field provided in the smaller sized celluloid, owing to its different proportion), and finally throwing it on to the screen by magnifying lenses, enlarging it in dimension and transforming its proportion in accordance with the wall of the cinema theatre. This same proceeding could equally well be used for vertical composition which, as shown by the drawing, by a very slight alteration of horizontal line could provide for the equally vertical, and then (when reduced) would equally not surpass the dimension of the ordinary screen. Remains to bewail the partial and every slight loss of the limits of the vertically composed pictures, and that wail only for the worst balcony and parterre seats, and even there only a very small loss.

"However, with the wide film very few close-ups are needed. After all, the main reason for close-ups is to get over thought (!!!—S.E.) and with the wide film you can get all the detail and expression in a full-sized figure that you would get in a six foot close-up with the 35 mm. film. . ."

(Although preferring, as far as my personal tastes are concerned in screen acting, the nearly imperceptible movement of the eyebrow, I none the less acclaim the possibility of a whole body expressing something. However, still, we cannot admit the expulsion of the close-up—the fixing of attention by isolation of a desired fact or detail, a quality still unrendered by the mere means of providing the body with disproportioned increase in absolute size.—S.E.)

Close-ups, moving camera shots, absolute dimensional variation of figures and objects on the screen, and the other elements concerned with montage are far more profoundly bound to the expressive means of cinema and cinema perception than is intended by the task of the mere facilitation of viewing a face, or the "getting over of a thought" on it.

As we have proclaimed (and partly, with Alexandroff, tried to show in humble essay form in that so grievously misunderstood in its intentions piece of irony *Romance Sentimentale*)—with the coming of sound montage does not die but develops, amplifying and multiplying its possibilities and its methods. . . .

3 / In the same way the advent of the wide screen marks one further stage of enormous progress in the development of montage, which once more will have to undergo a critical review of its laws; laws mightily affected by the change of absolute screen dimension making impossible or unsuitable quite a number of the montage processes of the days of the olden screen, but on

From Eisenstein's last film turned in Mexico.

Instantané du dernier film tourné au Mexique, par Eisenstein.

Aus dem letzten in Mexiko gedrehten film Eisensteins.



the other hand providing us with such a gigantic new agent of impression as the rhythmic assemblage of varied screen shapes, the attack upon our perceptive field of the affective impulses associated with the geometric and dimensional variation of the successive various possible dimensions, proportions and designs.

And, accordingly, if, to many of the qualities of Normal Screen montage laws we must proclaim: "... le roi est mort!"

Yet with much greater strength we must acclaim with "vive le roi!" the newcoming of the hitherto unvisualised and hitherto unimaginable montage possibilities of Grandeur Film!

SERGE EISENSTEIN.

Santa Maria Tonantzintla, Cholula, Mexico.



From Eisenstein's last film turned in Mexico.

Instantané du dernier film tourné au Mexique, par Eisenstein.

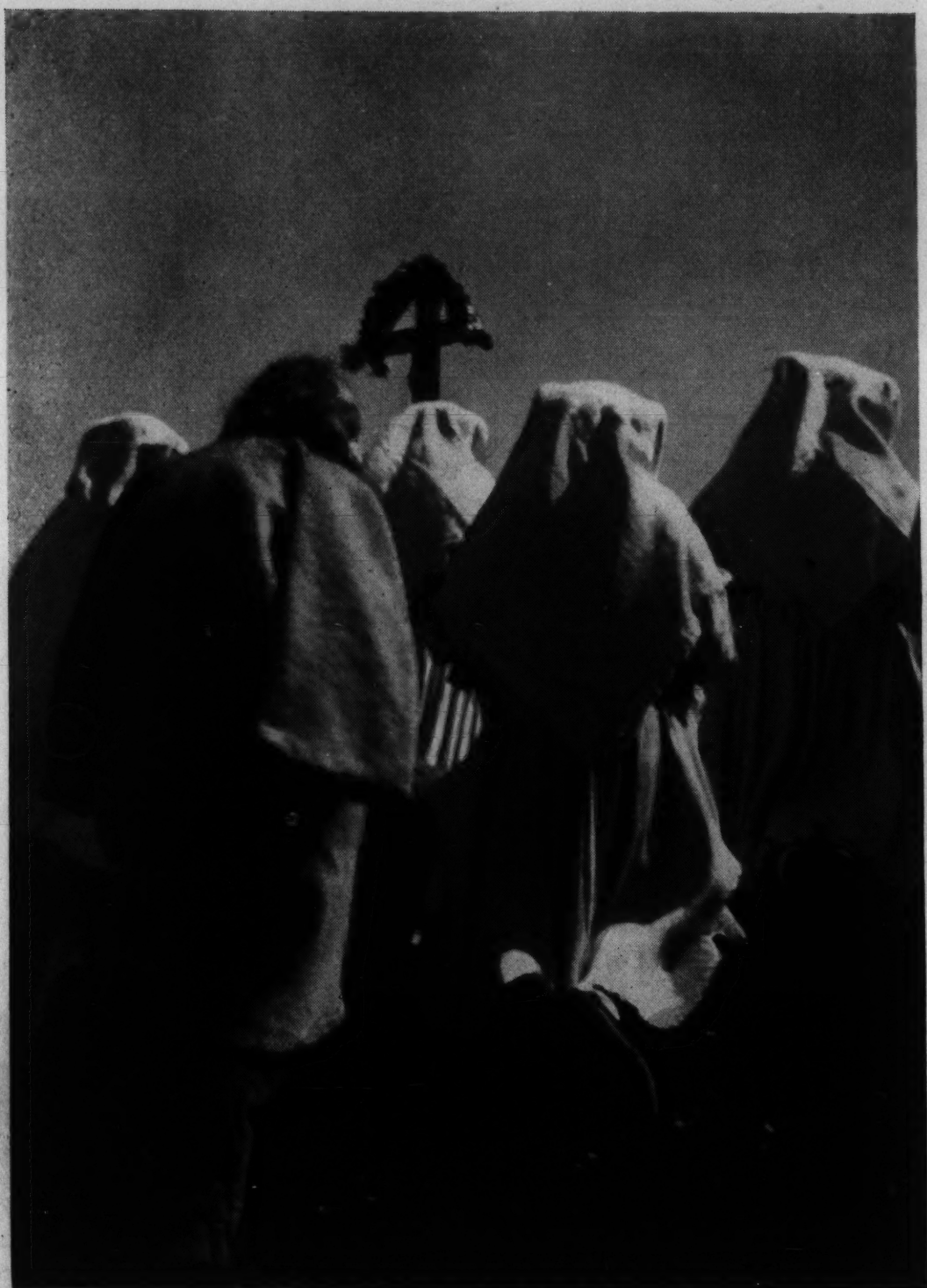
Aus dem letzten in Mexiko gedrehten film Eisensteins.



Scenery in Sequoia National Park, used for "The Great Meadow," a Charles Brabin Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer picture.

Paysage du Parc National Sequoia, utilisé dans "La Grande prairie," une production de la Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer signée Charles Brabin.

Szenerie aus dem Sequoia National Park, die für "Die grosse Weise," einem Charles Brabin-Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Film benützt wurde.



Divine service under the open sky in ancient Slovakian ethnographical regions. From the Czech film, "On the Mountains and in the Valleys" of karel Plicka.

Le service divin en plein air dans une ancienne région ethnographique de la Slovaquie : Tiré du film tchèque de karel Plicka : " Sur les monts et dans les vallées.

Gottesdienst unter freiem Himmel in einem völkerkundlich interessanten Gebiet der Slowakei. Aus dem tschech Film " Auf den Bergen und in den Tälern " von karel Plicka.

ON THE MOUNTAINS AND IN THE VALLEYS

(A picture of life of the people in the Slovakian countryside ; 2500 metres.)

Essentially it is an ethnographical picture. The Slovakian folklore, however, is of so much poetic character that it is identical with the people's art.

Indeed, all that fills up the life of Slovakian people is sanctified with the spark of art. I sincerely and willingly admit that it was this very artistic character of Slovakian folklore that tempted me first to record folk songs and music and only later it has brought me to film work. I did not wish to make a dry documentary and descriptive picture but an artistic documentation which would preserve the flavour of the original as much as possible. This way of documentation is not, of course, in discord with reality, on the contrary, it is only the motive seen and felt in an artistic way that raises it to the full optical effect.

Mountain country that prevails in Slovakia, the political situation before 1918 and even other circumstances were the reasons through which the people in Slovakian villages preserved their traditional ways of living in full swing and almost undecayed to the present day. What is typical of the creative power of the natives is an unusual variety and many-sidedness: almost every parish has its own peculiarity and very often two villages in the closest neighbourhood differ essentially one from the other. Here, in the very heart of Europe, there still exists an ancient popular culture, archaic ways of home and farming, ancient national costumes are preserved, wonderful physiognomies are to be seen, it is here where old Slavism sings its last song.

I think the most satisfying discovery I put into my picture, are the plays of mountain boys which represent ingenious athletics and gymnastics. The boys have such a great abundance of them that they are beyond comparison. Though these plays are very funny and witty, they are more than mere plays: they are an involuntary and deeply serviceable training for life, as the beautiful but rough mountain scenery, which is the home of these boys, requires the people to be hardened and physically efficient. I shall go into details about them on the occasion of my next sound picture *Pastorale*, the day of shepherd children in the mountains, in which the most original of these plays will be set in a frame of a plot.

Sheaf-band—a moment of ancient reaping from the Czech film "On the Mountains and in the Valleys" of karel Plicka.

Scène campagnarde et traditionnelle, du film tchèque de karel Plicka: "Sur les monts et dans les vallées."

Garbenbinden—ein Detail der Erntearbeit nach alter Weise. Aus dem tchech Film "Auf den Bergen und in den Tälern," von karel Plicka.





*A game of boys called "The Whip."
Un jeu d'enfants dénommé "Le Fouet."
Ein knaben spiel, genannt "Die Peitsche."*



*Shepherd boys at play.
Divertissements de pâtres.
Hirtenkanben beim Spiel.*



Ancient technique of making gobelins. From the Czech film, "On the Mountains and in the Valleys," of karel Plicka.

Technique ancienne de la fabrication des gobelins. Du film tchèque de karel Plicka : "Sur les Monts et dans les Vallées."

Alte Technik der Gobelinverfertigung. Aus dem tschech Film "Auf den Bergen und in den Tälern," von karel Plicka.

My picture was made possible through the direct support of T. G. Masaryk, President of Czechoslovakia, and through the ethnographical section of the Matica Slovenská. It was pre-viewed by different groups of artists and art schools and is scheduled for public showing in autumn of this year.

KAREL PLICKA.



An old bag-piper plays for a dance during pasture time. From the Czech film, "On the Mountains and in the Valleys," of Karel Plicka.

Un vieux joueur de cornemuse anime la danse au pâturage. Du film tchèque de Karel Plicka : "Sur les monts et dans les vallées."

Ein alter Dudelsackpfeifer spielt während der Weidezeit zum Tanze auf. Aus dem tschech Film "Auf den Bergen und in den Tälern," von Karel Plicka.

CAN CINEMA BE TAUGHT?

Crashing into the movies by sofa-appeal.

Crashing into the movies by exploiting American manufactured tractors.

"Forward," as the titles used to say—still do in *The Pick of the Pictures*—in the old Russian propaganda films, "and onward." To make it quite clear : forward *and* onward.

Not one way, not two ways, but several ways of crashing !

Pause for classical jokes.

On the Day of Atonement there are no trade shows. AND. If you cry out "Sam" in Wardour Street every window flies open !

Why, thuswise, seek to crash into the Street of Celluloid ?

Then, some people want to look like the goddamned creatures in the fan papers ; they (the goddamned ones) complicate matters by all trying to look alike.

(Hugh Castle might have put it with more news sense. They gave up the filming of *The Creation of the World* because the public couldn't tell the difference between Lon Chaney and an orinithorhynchus or giant centipede and line of hoofers . . . you know the light touch ?)

Meanwhile, young men pour out of the Universities and DO hope to crash studio gates.

Pour out of Universities.

We have seen Universities on the screen. We have seen more than plenty of girls and boys behaving in, or on, a strange place, called "the campus," exactly as if they were on the boards of a revue stage. (American producers have used almost every setting at one time or another and backstage settings almost all the time.) But the Universities from which the young men come seem even more of a waste of time.

Are the authorities content that the cinema shall always remain a self educated industry?

Are the authorities content that graduates have to take the position of office boy?

A more practical education: a filmic one? (Not, this time, the question of education by films but the comprehensive education possible in making them.)

A game of boys called "The Hawk"; from the Czech film, "On the Mountains and in the Valleys."

"L'épervier," autre jeu d'enfants, dans le film tchèque: "Sur les Monts et dans les Vallées."

Ein Knabenspiel, genannt "Der Habicht." Aus dem tschech Film, "Auf den Bergen und in den Tälern."



Hundreds of enthusiastic young men come down with high hopes of entering the film world. Business, when all is said and resaid, is the first consideration of an industry. University applicants have no specialised knowledge: they are not trained how not to make a nuisance of themselves in the studio. The studio authorities may be aware that there is an energy to be capitalised; yet, at too great an expense.

A Chair of Cinema?

An idea?

Somebody once twittered that *Close Up* missed a lot of fun by not having an Answer Man. (Vivian de Vere was born in 1865 of Polish parents who were fond of telling Irish stories. V. de V. ran away from home as soon as she was old enough to understand Irish.) For *Close Up*, though, there would be but one question to answer; "How can I learn cinema?"

There are many shocks in store for those who seek fame, adventure and a couple of hundred pounds a week!

The Cinema Academies?

Investigation?

A story?

Plucked Eyebrows glared at the journalist in search of copy. The Principal was not in. Yes, he could wait. I-mean-all-things-to-all-men walk, as skirt whisked round corner.

Parked in the reception room, the journalist filled in time by looking at pictures on the wall; oak-framed photographs of graduates in what were harnesses rather than dresses. (Ladies, in ill-fitting pseudo-Greek costumes, trying to show their curves and discovering they hadn't got any.)

When the Principal arrived he looked, in that dilapidatedly uncanny way, like anyone else connected with the movies. (Superior creatures like cats even look alike when discovered in film offices.)

"An unscrupulous woman has lured you to a tragic doom. She is a decoy for an opium den. . ."

Tense silence while the journalist tried to look all that.

"Star in three weeks. Your name in electric lights."

"But I only came to look round."

Afterwards, pointing to a strange object mounted on a tripod, "Is *that* your camera?"

"Not," the Principal confessed becoming candid for *THE PRESS*, "much of a camera, between you and I, old man. Alright for putting up in front of pupils. Gets them used to the feel of a camera. You know, old man: handle turns, but if you tried to pan, might collapse. Rather funny, eh?"

(Journalists always were exacting people, wanting everything for the public's money.)

"Do," the journalist managed, "you give technical courses?"

"We . . . er . . . arrange for them, old man."



Girls dancing beneath the Tatra Mountains. From the Czech film, "On the Mountains and in the Valleys," of Karel Plicka.

Fillettes dansant devant les montagnes de Tatra. Du film tchèque : "Sur les monts et dans les vallées."

Mädchen tanzen am Fusse der Tatra. Aus dem tschech Film, "Auf den Bergen und in den Tälern," von Karel Plicka.

Truth, so cynically called, in this country, the best policy.

Down the stairs of the wretched place the journalist stumbled. An absurdly irrelevant phrase beat in his mind; "*The Fate of the Missionary* was a great success in the Cannibal Isles; the audience simply ate it up."

Much the journalist had expected to find (otherwise he would not have gone) but he had not expected to find quite this (otherwise he would not have gone).

Buy a course and be sold . . . you know the light touch?

On the other hand there is a tragedy behind it, behind Cinema Academy.

What solution can be found for the young men? Not, surely, a training before a collapsible camera?

Economically, England will soon be full of young men of all ages.

* * *

"Still the rainy season in Moscow!"

That was, once, the slogan of London's bright young things.

Can Cinema be Taught is a double-edged title. Can the art of Cinema be taught and can the Cinema be taught art.

It needs *teaching*, also.

I remember:

The studio "char" who drank the developer in the thermos flask.

The assistant cameraman who said to the cameraman on location, "WE forgot to bring it!"

The boss with a hat on which a conjuror would have doted (it would not have mattered if the eggs did break inside it), and a coat which, if it had not seen better days, must always have had a pretty rotten time.

(Many true words spoken in jest; generally one borrowed from the latest comedy of the Marx Brothers . . . you know the light touch?)

I remember :

The studio hands who had to be up at dawn to catch the morning worm, or caught the morning bird instead.

The studio hands who had to stay past midnight to finish their job, or their job was finished.

The novices who were trained, possibly to sell vacuums (very empty) instead of how to make cinema : for it would never do for the assistant to learn too much of a game that is eighty per cent bluff.

Playing on a crooked level, keeping rules even if there are precious few of them?

Some of the literati of the film world can make pleasant marks on official documents; others, in such emergencies, are a shade shaky with the complicated cross stroke. Yes, sir, to this day! Ask who Mr. Shakespeare is and get an answer although the details may be vague. Ask who Mr. Aeschylus is and be told EXACTLY what you are!

The finger bowls are not to spit in.

I remember :

The movie stars who took more risks than their doubles; they went to their own premiers.

The supervisors who approached a von Stroheim to direct a one reel comedy.

The female studio correspondents who spoke of "bloom" and, in less inspired moments, of "roses."

Who will teach :

The Eternal Pilgrim, Chaplin, the way home?

The highbrow film groups that it is odd to show their audiences peasant films made for peasant audiences.

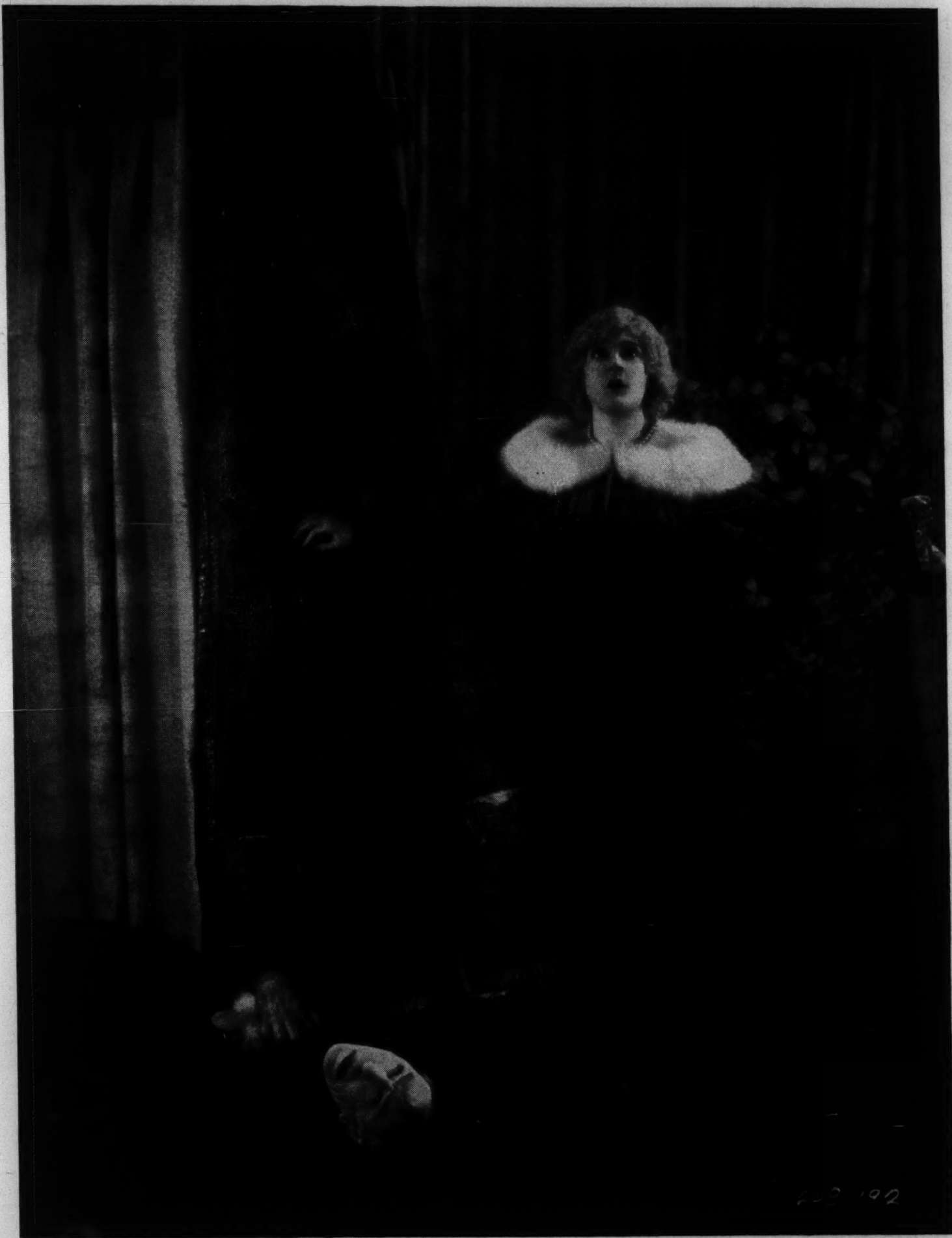
The proleterians, at the film meetings at the Russian Embassy, that it is unkind to criticise the consciously third-best clothes of the bourgeois.

The magazine reviewers that perfume cannot be mechanically recorded like sight and sound.

Who will teach the film fans that if the stars have made a hit with them, it does not follow that they will make a hit with the stars. (*Chatting with Clara or Gazing at Garbo.* "How do you do . . . I can't tell you how I admire your work . . . Mean to say . . . Admire your work." Why go on when one suspects many of such conversations, somehow.)

With talk one hears the commonplaces of parlance so many times more that they become so many times more commonplace.

Extra "raped" motion!



An exclusive censored scene from Stroheim's "Merry Widow." Published by courtesy of Herman Weinberg.

Une scène exclusive censurée de "La Veuve Joyeuse" de Stroheim. Publiée grâce à l'obligeance de M. Hermann Weinberg.

Exclusive Photo einer zensurierten Szene aus, "Die Lustige Witwe" von Stroheim. Veröffentlicht mit freundlicher Genehmigung von Hermann Weinberg.



An abstract background from a recent advertising film by Francis Bruguière and Oswald Blakeston.

Un arrière-plan abstrait du récent film de publicité tourné par Francis Bruguière et Oswald Blakeston.

Ein abstrakter Hintergrund aus einem neuen Reklamefilm von Francis Bruguière und Oswald Blakeston.

(The show world simply cannot do without THEM: Zeigfeld and the tired business man make strange, and ominous, noises if anyone threatens to deprive the stage of THEM; the hearts of popular cinema patrons throb when THEY flit on the screen. The Americans call them chorines: there is no accounting for taste . . . you know the light touch?)

If you wish for a thing strongly enough, the mystics say, you will attract it towards yourself.

Who will teach?

BUT :

There is a difference between the leaf of the palm and its fruit—I mean when it is offered as a present, or thrown from roof tops.

(Jacque Cartiers' voodoo dance in the *King of Jazz* was the first example of tonal montage : BUT, what a great picture *All Quiet* might have been if it had been presented without any cuts and with a slowly expanding screen.)

" Still the rainy season in Moscow."

* * *

And I would be the last to say that cinema is over-mysterious.

We have had the magic lantern ; not the magic projector or the magic recorder. It is the natural medium of a dynamic age (tut-tut).

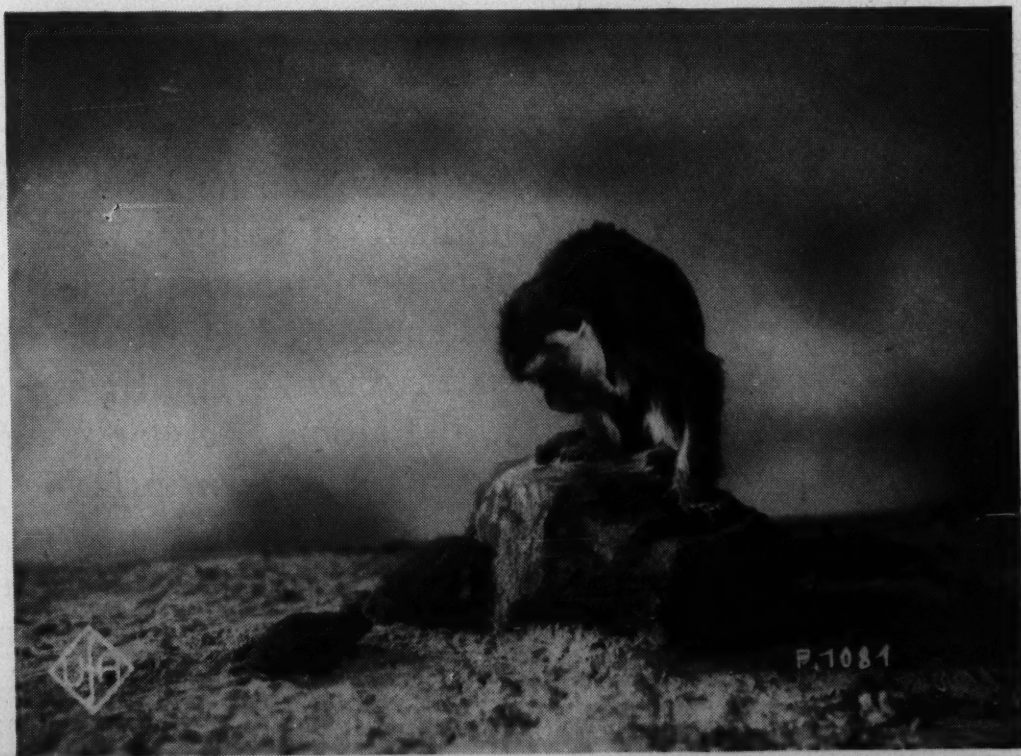
It is easier to make an entertaining film than a picture of the same class. A second glance at the picture shows its weakness ; the film is drawn away.

Children are taught (modern method) art appreciation by pasting up coloured shapes of paper. It is easier than drawing images.

The filmic avant-garde of Paris know well enough that the camera can provide images already made.

Naturally, a great film is as hard as any other great achievement. The architecture of the created and controlled is not the same as the talented assemblage of coloured paper.

OSWELL BLAKESTON.



Ali, the fourhanded star of Ufa's Educational Department, has two strange visitors.

Ali, la vedette à quatre bras du dépt. documentaire de l'Ufa, recevant la visite de M. et Mme. Crapaud.

Ali, der Star der Ufa-Kulturabteilung, bekommt Besuch von Herrn und Frau Kröte.



From "Alone", by Kosintzof and Trauberg. An Altai singer.

De "Solitude," par Kozintzof et Trauberg. Un chanteur Altai.

Aus "Allein," einem Film von Kozintzof und Trauberg. Ein Sänger vom Altai.

ON FILM PATROL

The London Public Morality Council has been on Film Patrol, and at their annual public meeting, held at Guildhall on a sunny March afternoon, they told Youth all about it. Youth sat at the reporter's table.

True, movies were not the only excitements of which the Council had to speak. The year had yielded many sorts of fun. The Bishop of London had found 22 books worth passing on to the Home Secretary; someone else had sent to Mr. Lansbury a list of things actually *seen* in Hyde Park; and 80 "daring nude or semi-nude" post-cards had been submitted to magistrates in the hope—vain, as it proved—that a prosecution would follow. But the real villain of every Councillor's speech was a film villain.

The Duchess of Atholl, for instance, had done a round of suburban cinemas and though she had apparently encountered little liveliness, she still felt that local authorities ought to make more extensive use of their powers to censor pictures, even when Mr. Shortt had passed them. "You see," she explained knowingly, "film actors have to be so much less subtle in their methods than stage actors, who have words to help them." (Do tell us, Duchess, now that we have the talkies, will Gladys Cooper quite oust poor bluff Uncle Pabst?) The Duchess was backed up by the Rev.

Henry Carter (Wesleyan) and by someone called Mrs. Ogilvie Gordon.

But it was not until we came to the Council's annual report that we fully realised how busy the film patrol had been. The story of its activities occupied 7½ pages, which may be summarised without comment as follows :

A DEPUTATION TO THE FILM CENSOR ; (i) urged reverent-treatment of " Sacred Rites " and the exclusion of " scenes with criminal or bootlegging elements or riotous luxury " ; (ii) urged Local Control of cinemas *guided by voluntary censorship* ; (iii) asked if " A " films could be marked " Not Suitable for Children " and if those specially suitable for children could have some special category. Mr. Shortt pointed out his difficulties but gave a conciliatory reply.

A STATEMENT BY THE HOME SECRETARY was made (December 11, 1930) in answer to various questions in Parliament. He favoured the system of allowing Local authorities the final decision as to whether a film should be allowed or prohibited in their area " according to circumstances."

THE CINEMA COMMITTEE, presided over by the Rev. Alfred Binks, dealt with reports on 599 films. " The Committee have been in constant touch with the censor on this all-important question of theme

From " Alone," a film by Kozintzof and Trauberg. Scenes on the Altai.

De " Solitude," un film par Kozintzof et Trauberg. Scènes de l'Altai.

Aus " Allein " einem Film von Kozintzof und Trauberg. Szenen auf dem Altai.





Tailga a religious sign from " Alone," a Soviet film.

Tailga, signe religieux de " Solitude," un film soviétique.

Tailga, ein religiöses Zeichen. Aus " Allein," einem Sowjet-Film.

and tendency. They were assured of the censor's appreciation of the situation, that considerable sections of many films had been cut, and that such policy would be continued."

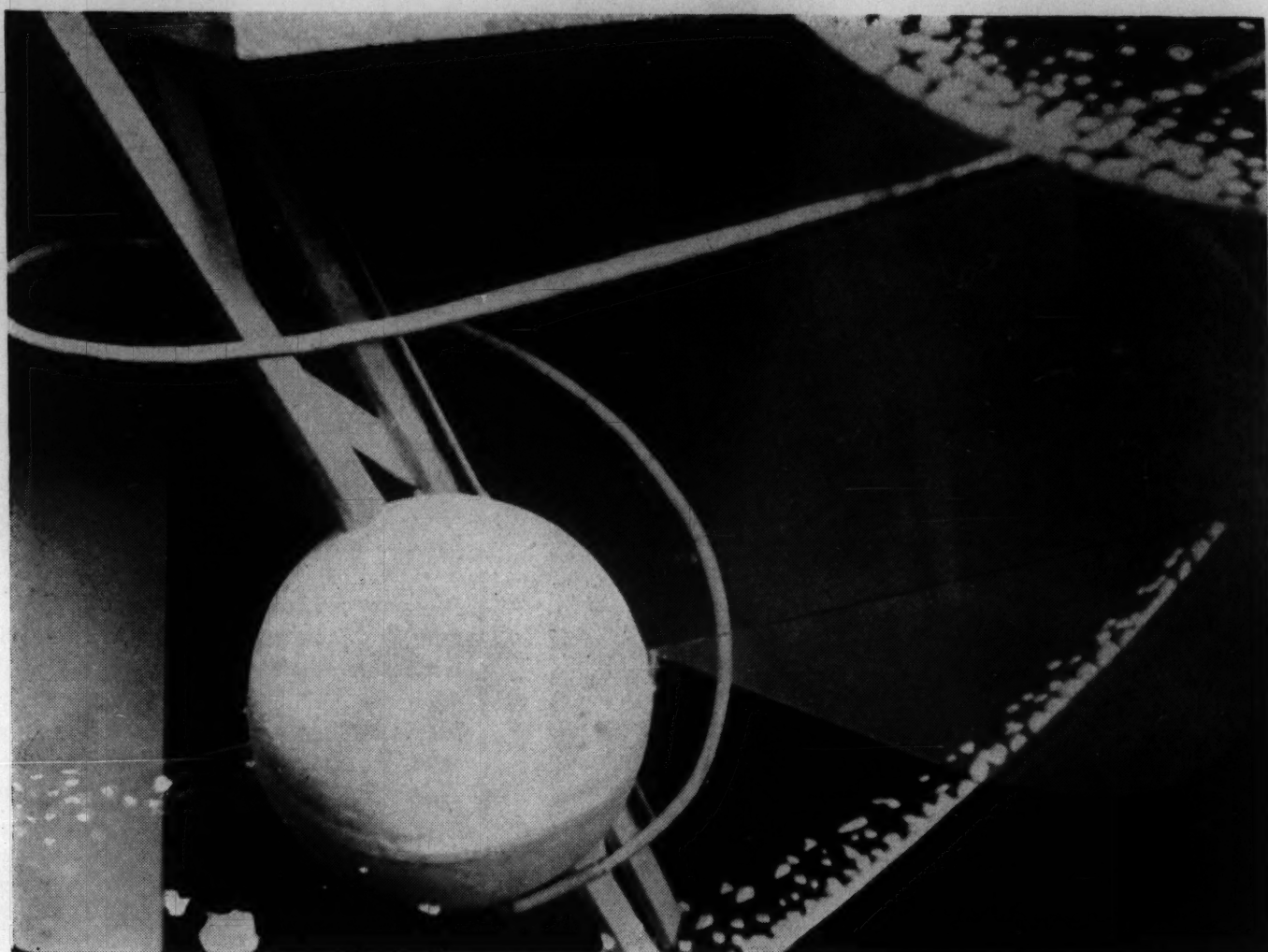
A COMMUNICATION TO U.S. FILM PRODUCERS resulted in a reply " considered to be disappointing and unsatisfactory."

COMMENDED LISTS OF FILMS for family use are being issued to subscribers of 10/- a year.

CONDUCT IN CINEMAS found to be " grossly improper " was reported " with necessary details, to the L.C.C. and Police and has now been almost completely checked." (The Council also condemned the " unbecoming familiarity " seen between young people in public parks.)

Well, well. I'm no spoilsport (as the Bishop of London remarked) and I think it's nice that old people who can find no beauty or wit or stimulation in the movies can at least get a kick out of the pleasures of the young. But they mustn't become a nuisance, mustn't badger Mr. Shortt and M.P.'s and local big-wigs into new wholesale prohibitions, mustn't hound young lovers out into the streets. Or must they?

G. GORDON YOUNG.



From a new Czech abstract, made by two young architectural students, O. Vara and F. Pilat. This picture, showing the beauty of electricity, was inspired by the light studies of Zdenek Pesanek.

D'un film d'avant-garde tchèque réalisé par deux jeunes étudiants architectes, O. Vara et F. Pilat. Cet film, révélant la beauté de l'électricité a été inspiré des études de Zdenek Pesanek, sur la lumière.

Aus einem neuen tschechischen absoluten Film, der von zwei jungen Studenten der Architektur O. Vara und F. Pilat hergestellt wurde. Dieser Film, der die Schönheit der Elektrizität zeigt, wurde durch die Lichtstudien Zdenek Pesaneks inspiriert.



Norma Shearer in "Let Us Be Gay," a Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer production.

Norma Shearer dans "Soyons gais," production de la Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

Norma Shearer in "Lasst uns lustig sein." Ein Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Film.

HOLLYWOOD REVIEW

Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and now nothing will be beholden from them which they purpose to do. Come, let us confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.

Self-assured Hollywood little recked what a genie of disruption it had unbottled when it let loose *The Singing Fool*. Today, amid the multilingual clamour of the talkies, it finds itself broken up into separate colonies, each with its own speech, its own people, its own interests. Hollywood is no longer *Hollywood*—the Hollywood of the movies which held dominion over the world by reason of its unity of language, the pristine Esperanto of filmdom. Now, indeed, is Hollywood become the modern Babel.

Lily Damita in Norma Shearer's role in the French version of "Let Us Be Gay."

Lily Damita, dans la version française de "Soyons gais" où elle interprète le même rôle que Norma Shearer.

Lily Damita in Norma Shearer's Rolle in der französischen Version von "Lasst uns lustig sein."



The sons of Abraham, who have heretofore confidently directed its destiny and the uprearing of its colossal tower of defiance, now stand aghast and bewildered amid the confusion of speech that surrounds them. Themselves lacking the mastery of so much as one spoken language, they impulsively seek to hold their threatened world markets by hiring translators and foreign actors to convert their product into a multiplicity of languages.

But it will not avail. *Min and Bill* ceases to be Hollywood when done into Spanish under the title of *Estrella Negra*, and with Marie Dressler and Wallace Beery replaced by Virginia Fabregas and Juan de Landa. It matters not that Señora Fabregas is acclaimed the Sarah Bernhardt of the Latin stage. Spain and South America may accept her as such, but the aura of Hollywood will never attend her.

The past year witnessed more than a hundred foreign-language versions turned out by the various studios. Spanish predominated, followed by French, German and Italian, with an occasional Hungarian, Portuguese, Swedish, Polish, Japanese, Jugoslavian, and Dutch. But the expected

popular response from the various countries was not forthcoming. Hollywood with its gift of tongues and its alien performers had lost its distinction, its glamour, its personality.

Nevertheless, not knowing what else to do, and in stupid unmindfulness of the changed psychological attitude of the outside world, the producers continue the wholesale importation of foreign talent—actors, directors, writers, translators—and Hollywood grows correspondingly more variant, more alien and more unfamiliar. I have before me at this moment a local film review with contributions in no less than six different languages, and



Scene from "Olympia," a French all talking picture produced at the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studios under the direction of Jacques Feyder.

Une scène "d'Olympia," film 100% parlant français réalisé par Jacques Feyder, dans les studios de la Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

Szene aus "Olympia," einen französischen 100% igen Sprechfilm, hergestellt im Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer-Studio. Regie: Jacques Feyder.

devoted to the exploitation of players and directors who, although in Hollywood, are no more a part of it and no more familiar to the American film colony than if they resided in their respective native lands.

With few exceptions, neither Hollywood nor the United States sees the films of these foreign artistes. The only German pictures shown here are those that have been produced in Berlin. Of the score of German films

made in Hollywood during the past twelve months not one has been exhibited in America. Although Dita Parlo is here and has been featured in several of Warner Brothers' German productions, our only screen sight of her has been in the UFA film, *Melodie Des Herzens*, imported from abroad and shown at the Hollywood Filmarte Theatre.



The same scene from "Olympia," this time Spanish version.

La même scène du film "Olympia," version espagnole.

Dieselbe Szene aus "Olympia" diesmal in der spanischen Fassung.

Meanwhile the original American Hollywood continues on its habitual way. Having latterly exhausted the public's patience with gangster and prison photoplays, it has now turned by way of refreshing change to pictures of the big out-of-doors, with especial emphasis upon historical pioneer themes. The reception accorded *The Covered Wagon*, produced several years ago, demonstrated the popular national interest in this type of picture,

as exemplifying American hardihood amid the trials and dangers attendant upon the conquest of the primeval wilderness of the West.

That this particular film was not immediately followed by others of like kind was due to its lack of appeal in other countries—and, until lately, it was the financial response from overseas upon which Hollywood depended to make good its reckless waste and extravagances. Now, however, with the enforced narrowing of the market for English-speaking films, and obliged more intensely than ever to hold the American public, the producers are vying one with another to meet the national demand for picturizations of Western frontier adventure.

In *Fighting Caravans*, Paramount depicts the story of those hardy frontiersmen who undertook the stupendous task of transporting thousands of tons of merchandise across fifteen hundred miles of plains, rivers and mountains to the newly discovered gold country of California. RKO's *Cimarron* portrays the historic "land rush" when the Indian Territory of Oklahoma was thrown open to white settlement. Fox's *The Big Trail*, like its companion picture, *The Santa Fe Trail*, dramatizes the blazing of a way to the Pacific for the civilization that was later to follow. In M-G-M's *The Great Meadow* is picturized the heroic story of the settlement of Kentucky in the days of Daniel Boone, when roving Indians added their savage menace to the natural dangers of the wilderness. And in *Stampede* Paramount has filmed the thrilling adventure of the first cattle drive from Texas to Kansas over the historic Chisholm Trail.

In films of this type Hollywood is at its best. Dealing as they do with the primitive and the elemental, these spectacular pictures, aside from their dramatic historical interest, have a sweep of canvas, a sincerity of expression, a charm of scenic background and pictorial composition, which in large measure compensate for much else that Hollywood inflicts upon us in the name of art and entertainment.

And to this list of exceptional pictures, redolent of nature and expressive of the elemental humanities, must be added Ernest Schoedsack's *Rango*. Wholly different in locale and theme and treatment, it none the less claims kinship on the ground of its picturization of the primitive. Otherwise it stands alone, not so much because of the unusualness of its background, but more particularly because of its novel characters and its unique, simple story—that of four natives of a Sumatran jungle, a tiger trapper and his young son and an old ape and his little son, Rango, whose lives (those of the humans and the simians) become interwoven through a fellowship of common interest engendered by the solitude and the hazards of their surroundings.

It is Schoedsack, you will recall, who, with his one-time fellow-explorer, Merian Cooper, gave us *Grass and Chang*. During the two-year interval following his Soudan picture, *The Four Feathers*, which Paramount egregiously effeminized with studio trimmings, he spent thirteen months in



A censored scene in Stroheim's "Merry Widow." This picture is published for the first time by courtesy of Herman Weinberg.

Une scène censurée de "La Veuve Joveuse" de Stroheim. Cette photo est publiée ici pour la première fois, grâce à l'obligeance de Hermann Weinberg.

Eine zensurierte Szene aus "Die lustige Witwe" von Stroheim. Mit freundlicher Genehmigung von Herman Weinberg wird dieses Bild hier zum ersten Male veröffentlicht.

From "The Erl King," a French talkie which Universal are presenting in London at the Rialto Cinema during the special foreign season.

Instantané du "Roi des Aulnes," film parlant français présenté au Rialto Cinema à Londres durant la saison étrangère, par Universal.

Aus "Der Erbkönig," einem französischen Sprechfilm, den Universal im Londoner Rialto-Kino zur Vorführung bringt.





Abel Gance takes the role of Christ in his "End of the World."

Abel Gance incarnant le Christ dans sa "Fin du monde."

Abel Gance stellt in seinem Film "Das Ende der Welt" Christus dar.

equatorial Sumatra gathering the material for his present picture, for which a bright mark must be credited to Hollywood under whose auspices it was made.

Then, too, there is Murnau's *Tabu*, recently released by Paramount. This is an idyllic film picturing the romantic primitive life of Bora Bora, one of the Society group of the South Sea archipelago. Exiling himself from Hollywood, where he was but scantily appreciated or understood, the creator of *The Last Laugh* and *Sunrise* spent a year and a half in this *dolce far niente* islet of the Pacific and devoted himself to a leisurely filming of this his last contribution to the screen.

Using his own funds, and thus completely independent of any commercial dictatorship, he made this picture in sympathetic collaboration with Robert Flaherty, to whom the world is indebted for those two cinematic classics, *Nanook of the North* and *Moana*. Out of a total of 250,000 feet of takes the charming photodrama of *Tabu* was created, with two native youngsters, Reri, the girl, and Matahi, the boy, as the leading characters;

and Murnau had only just completed the cutting of the film upon his return to Hollywood when he met his tragic death in an automobile accident.

Apologetically, *Trader Horn* may also be included in the list of exotic scenic pictures. While it contains much of characteristic native interest, particularly in its showing of the wild-animal life of Africa, it is overburdened with theatricalism and a conscious effort to be spectacular. Moreover, those who expect to find in it any of the naive flavour of the book or an adherence to Horn's simple narrative will experience definite disappointment, as well as bewilderment.

After having lain on the shelf in the Paramount studio for many years, Theodore Dreiser's sordid and melancholy novel, *An American Tragedy*, has finally been dusted off and under the direction of Josef von Sternberg will shortly be transferred to the screen. It was seriously considered as a vehicle for Eisenstein during that director's misfit stay in Hollywood.

The latest Hollywood technical departure is the use of the supersensitive film originally designed for astronomical photography. Its application to motion-picture use, an achievement of the Eastman Kodak Company, has been hailed as "the greatest advance in the development of cinematic photography since the introduction of panchromatic film." The new film, which has had its first commercial tryout in M-G-M's John Gilbert picture, *Cheri-Bibi*, requires less light, develops clearer backgrounds, softer shadows and more natural colour values, and, in addition, makes possible many heretofore unattainable camera effects.

Whatever Hollywood may lack of *savoir vivre*, it must be given unqualified credit for commercial and practical intelligence. Its ever alert readiness to adopt any means of improving the mechanics of cinematography, irrespective of cost or initial difficulties, explains in large measure the secret of its preeminence in the field of picture production. Perhaps, therefore, we should deal softly with its cultural shortcomings. These may be overcome in time. Hollywood is still young, still growing, and, withal, immensely ambitious to be polite.

Not inappropriately, in this connection, Jacques Feyder has suggested that Hollywood inaugurate a system of personally conducted educational tours of Europe for the benefit of its callow American players and directors. A suggestion as ingenious as it is timely. Since the advent of the talkies the demand for short cuts to culture has steadily increased. French in ten lessons, the essentials of etiquette, the world's literature in a nutshell—these and other tabloids of education and polish are proving a present popular means of self-improvement among the élite of filmdom. And if there be any doubt of their efficacy, consider the recent public announcement issued in all seriousness from the studio of Buster Keaton, that, after an intensive course in German, coupled with a trip to Berlin, "Keaton now speaks the tongue of Goethe and Schiller."

CLIFFORD HOWARD.



From a Czech nature picture, "Demänova," the great stalactite cave in Slovakia; made by cameraman V. Vich under the direction of Ing. Brychta. This picture was produced by Elektrajournal.

Photo du film tchèque : "Demänova," document sur la grotte célèbre de stalactites, en Slovaquie. Cameraman : V. Vich ; direction : Ing. Brychta. Le film est produit par Elektrajournal.

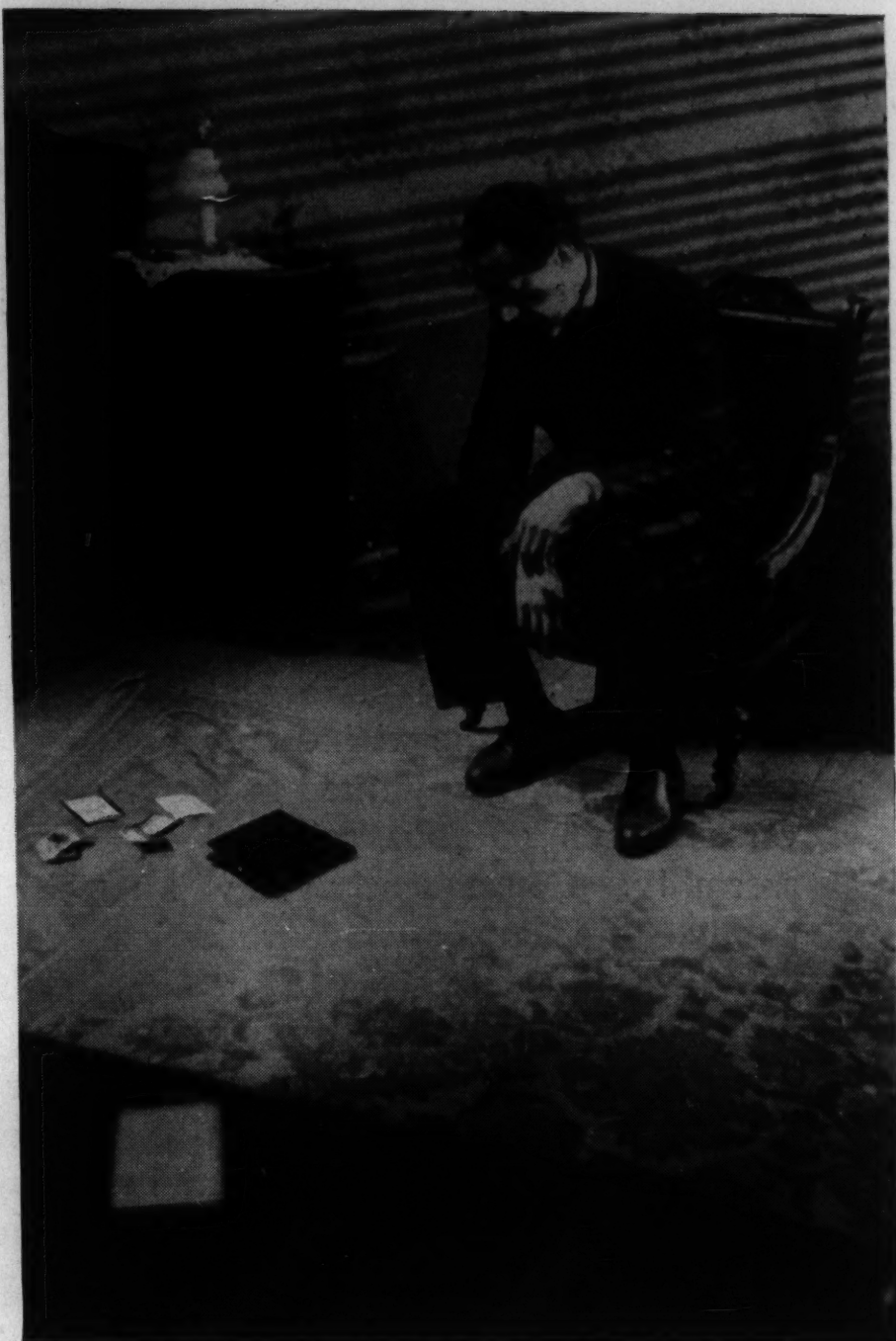
Aus einem tschechischen Naturfilm, "Demänova," die grosse Tropfsteinhöhle in der Slowakei. V. Vich als Kameramann. Regie : Ing. Brychta. Dieser Film wurde von Elektrajournal hergestellt.



L. H. Struna in a new Czech talkie by Gustave Machaty, "Night of Fulfilled Desire."

L. H. Struna dans le nouveau film parlant tchèque de Gustave Machaty: "Le nuit du désir satisfait."

L. H. Struna in dem neuen tschechischen Sprechfilm von Gustav Machaty, "Nacht des erfüllten Wunsches."



"The Way of Enthusiasts," a film made by N. Ochlopkoff whose "Sold Appetite" was shown last winter in Paris.

"La voie des enthousiastes," film réalisé par N. Ochlopkoff, auteur également de "L'homme qui a vendu son appétit" présenté l'hiver dernier à Paris.

"Der Weg der Enthusiasten," ein Film von N. Ochlopkoff, dessen, "Verkaufter Appetit" letzten Winter in Paris vorgeführt wurde.

BEFORE THE MICROPHONE OF GERMAN BROADCASTING

A. KRASZNA-KRAUSZ: I know how unprepared you were, elected follower of Lupu Pick, President of the " Dachorganisation der Filmschaffenden Deutschlands EV." I also heard you emphatically tell to the congregated delegations that you were unable to settle any programme at the moment. You said: one should leave you a break of two or three weeks. During that time you wanted to visit the members' assemblies of all the associations directly allied to the " Dach," such as the unions of the authors, the directors, the cameramen, the architects, the composers, the actors, the sound-experts and production managers; to make yourself acquainted with the wishes and moods of the singular parties participating in film-work. You wanted to form your programme according to the transverse section of your collected impressions and so present it to a new assembly. Consequently you will not be able either to tell your programme to-day—three days after your election and here—I know that too well. But here is something else. You will be able to talk fundamentally about problems, surely already treated by you at a time when a leading participation in their solving had not yet been your immediate task—but concerning which you must have been in active relation ever since. In future it will not less depend upon your fundamental relations—for they show your intentions—than upon the opinions of the various members, whose confidence in you has been shown so demonstratively, and who alone will prescribe for you the technical conditions and the tactical measures of the ways which the " Dach " will have to follow during the course of the years.

G. W. PABST: The answer is simple. My fundamental relation to the principal problems is almost like the one of my predecessor, of the first leader of the " Dach ": Lupu Pick. You know: Lupu Pick's initiative in founding organisations of the film-workers rose from that Congress in Paris, which had been convened from the " Institut für geistige Zusammenarbeit " in the frame of the League of Nations, in 1926. At this congress the mistakes which a process of production developed during stormy commercial prosperity must make, became evident for the first time. During such a process the originators of mental-creative work were (and are) not able to decide sufficiently for themselves. They are used *as material* nearly always. This vitiation in the organism of film-industry was only too often manifest in the resulting production, and violently and justly attacked by the critics. Besides there were effects ensuing from that faulty system of an industry, which, while not manifest to the public, are the true reason, why the film though possessing the favour of the masses, often leaves unsatisfied its most passionate friends.



Lotte Lenja in "The Threepenny Opera." A study by Hans Casparius.

Lotte Lenja dans "l'Opéra de quat' sous." Etude de Hans Casparius.

Lotte Lenja in "Die Dreigroschenoper." Studie von Hans Casparius.

Rudolf Forster and Carola Neher in "The Threepenny Opera" by Pabst. An exclusive photo by Hans Casparius.

Rudolf Forster et Carola Neher dans la version allemande de "L'Opéra de quat'sous" de Pabst. Photo exclusive de Hans Casparius.

Rudolf Forster und Carola Neher in dem Film "Die Dreigroschenoper" von Pabst. Ein Exclusiv-Photo von Hans Casparius.



A. KRASZNA-KRAUSZ : I think, that I have understood you rightly, if I suppose that you are thinking of the disposition peculiar to the film-industry, to satisfy by quantity every demand, every new possibility, every prosperity immediately. By the highest possible number of films, plots, names. Or by mechanized repetition, intensive and extensive use of nearly the same film-motif, similar titles, of the same plot and a single name.

G. W. PABST : You are right. The film ought to make a better use of its material; to select the motives and people, from the masses floating to it, and keep those productive for ever, instead of abusing and killing the success of a person or a motif by hundredfold repetition—as it is done to-day.

A. KRASZNA-KRAUSZ : Now I think we are discussing the main problem. The public of course remembers only the staterooms, in which the actors of this or that film walked about in nonchalant fashion. In the appraisal of the audience there are the stipends which one star, selected from hundreds, gains (if it is true). It has only the motor-car in view with which almost every actor has already been photographed as advertisement. But it does not know anything of the sorrows, which also the successful one has to fight between two employments. Nor does it know anything of the brevity peculiar to film-careers.

G. W. PABST : That's how it is. In consequence of the ill-proportion between the power of people available, and the limited number of workdays, most of the persons working on films are not able to procure economic reserves for themselves. Then whole crowds are thrown into the streets by a crisis, such as resulted from the change from silent to sound-films. These people deprived of work and bread, desolate and hopeless, become ready to take any job. So the competition becomes sharper, and the natural consequence is a depression of the level.

A. KRASZNA-KRAUSZ : That does not sound encouraging. The general economic crisis seems to be superposed by a wrong industrial organism in this case, which has as effect a cultural crisis of a whole branch of art. But can this special situation not make us hope for a special solution of the questions concerned with the matter?

G. W. PABST : May be. But the industry has got a certain individual perseverance, that's to say, its young traditions will always be in the way of reforming ideas (and it is the young traditions which are the most powerful ones). The state too looks on our matter still rather passively, several young officials of the ministries in charge of the matter however form a pleasant exception. It is of importance to state that the continuity of our development depends only on the people partaking in film-work. The history of cinematography will have to show that the industry represented by its firms, changes the sign-boards, colours, directions and money-owners; the steady element of the film, and of its trade, however, is represented by the staff of artists. Consequently the initiative for changing the situation can and must arise only from the people working on the production of films.

A. KRASZNA-KRAUSZ: You are talking of an initiative. Besides the aims, do you also see the paths over which the initiative could be led?

G. W. PABST: Ways—no! But rather distinct directions. It is understood that the artists and technicians of the film should claim the same social insurances as the workers of all the other industries. But it is of decisive importance to determine the relations between the film-author and his work. The rights of the poet and the composer have been legally settled long ago. But the social question of the film-worker remains unsolved as long as the film is the exclusive property, that is to say: "goods" in the hands of the manufacturer and his renters. Unsolved also the question of its responsibility towards the public critic and the art itself.

A. KRASZNA-KRAUSZ: What you have just said might perhaps be summarized as follows: the determination of the legal situation of the film-workers must lead to a settled material position. That only can form the fundamental of a working system, conscious of responsibility.

G. W. PABST: Indeed—there is already enough responsibility taken by the person who works on films. He is responsible to the audience that whistles after a failure. To the critics, who object only to him. To the manufacturer who will not employ him any more. Certainly the manufacturer may lose money, but the film-worker loses his existence. Behind that there is *nothing* for him. Who will be surprised to hear that the number of those who take a chance on an unusual film-production decreases daily?

A. KRASZNA-KRAUSZ: It seems to me that the history of an art can merely consist in taking chances. There is, however, a difference between chances and chances. One might risk a poem, a short story, perhaps a novel, also a drama, even a symphony. In the worst case they remain in the drawer of the writing-desk. One might die from hunger with that method, but even become immortal—in case the drawer is opened after several years.

G. W. PABST: But we film-people cannot work for writing-desk-drawers. For we need money and machines already as supposition for our production. And if the money does not favour the Shakespeare of the film, his "Hamlet" remains unwritten. For studio and apparatus are locked for him.

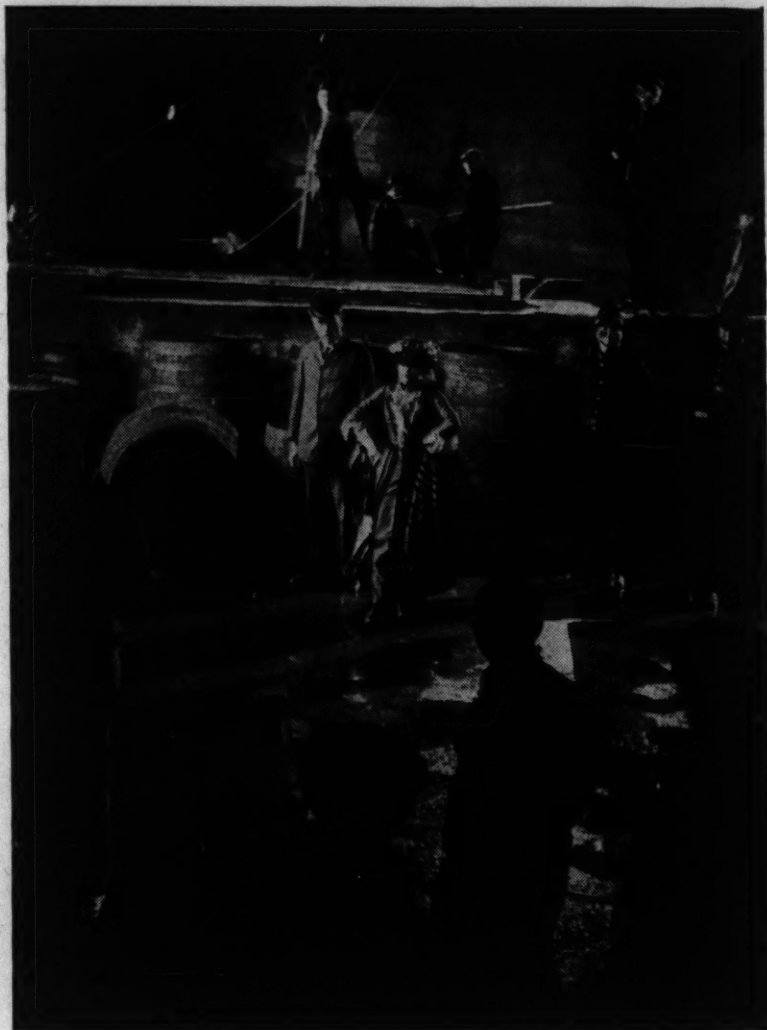
A. KRASZNA-KRAUSZ: Dangerous system. Just in that moment that might decide the future of the film. And when it does not seem improbable that this future will be decided in the German studios.

G. W. PABST: You are right. Once already, eight years ago, Germany was able to determine the development of the silent film. Then Germany like the whole rest of the world succumbed to the American film. Now for the second time the fate of the European film is lying in the hands of Germany. France, England have succumbed afresh to American money. Russia has not yet succeeded in finding a productive attitude to the sound-film. America's production however has driven into a blind alley, out of which the way will scarcely be found alone, Germany is uncommonly enabled by its literary and musical past to determine the shape of the sound-film of to morrow, if . . .

A. KRASZNA-KRAUSZ : —if the German industry will not be Americanised in spite of all that. If the Russia of the silent film won't remain eternally the "Mekka" of the German critics.

G. W. PABST : —and if the German film-workers will at last determine their fate—and with it the fate of the German film—all by themselves.

A. KRASZNA-KRAUSZ : And it is YOU who has to care for it now.



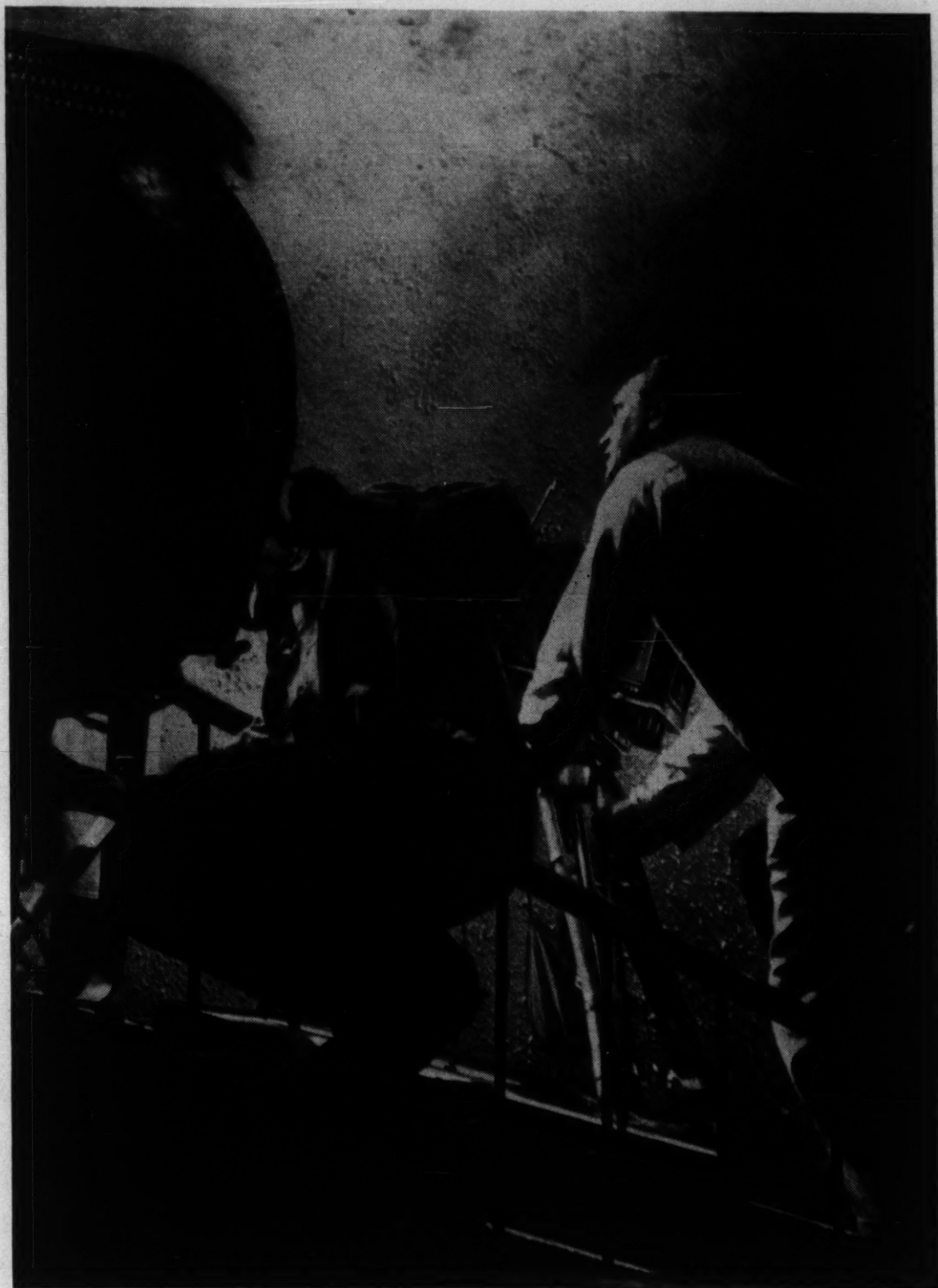
*Valeska Gert in "The Threepenny Opera."
A study by Hans Casparius.*

*Valeska Gert dans "l'Opéra de quat'sous."
Etude par Hans Casparius.*

*Valeska Gert in "Die Dreigroschenoper."
Studie von Hans Casparius.*

BERLIN APRIL 1931

I am back in Berlin and that means always a reawakening of life. For it is the most stimulating city, intellectually, in Europe, perhaps because the new buildings express outwardly modern thought. Other cities try to hide or stem the current of progress but here interest is expressed in visible terms; the city exterior has accepted thought in spite of the inner reaction which, friends tell me, is sweeping Germany back, particularly in education, towards old unprogressive methods.



A study of Wagner at his camera, "like a cannon," filming Pabst's "Threepenny Opera," a nineteenth century adaptation of "The Beggars' Opera." Exclusive study by Hans Casparius.

Une étude de Wagner à sa camera "en forme de canon," lors de la réalisation du film de Pabst : "L'Opéra de quat'sous," adaptation moderne de "L'Opéra des mendiants." Photo exclusive de Hans Casparius.

Eine Studie Wagners an seiner Kamara "wie an einer Kanone," während er Pabst's "Dreigroschenoper"—eine Übertragung der Bettleroper in das 19. Jahrhundert-filmt. Exklusiv-Studie von Hans Casparius.

The new line of the windows suggests the horizon, adventure and exploration. They are wide, built for light. The old vertical line was stern, like long standing patient lamps. These houses are born of impatience with non-achievement and with the dwellers in gloomy buildings whose near-sighted plans ended in crisis and war. The air is so sharp it must have blown in from fishing fleets and ice. The rhythm is swifter though the season is later; trees that were in full flower in Switzerland are only in bud here.

It may be true that this is colour of the surface. There are hints now and again of reaction underneath. But at least we must be thankful for the present beauty of Berlin, for the use they have made of light against so electric a sky, the definite blue, the many shades of orange and of yellow, from the kino lamps to the buses, from the moon to the searchlight of the wireless station, picking out tree-lined streets.

There are first the cinema advertisements to be studied. *Voruntersuchung* is running at the Gloria Palast, directed by Siodmak, whom *Close Up* readers will remember for his work in *Menschen am Sonntag*. The Ufa Palast still has *City Lights*, but the first sound film of Fritz Lang is expected there shortly, and has Wagner for cameraman. There is Pabst's *Drei Groschen Oper* across the road, *Earth* in several cinemas, in the Kamera and locally with, strange mixture, an American comic film. *Ariane* with Elizabeth Bergner is being shown up the road and the German version of *Anna Christie* is everywhere. A new Russian film is announced and in the film papers are particulars of the special night showing arranged by the Deutsche Liga für Unabhängigen Film, of Kenneth Macpherson's *Borderline*.

So arrangement of the days becomes a puzzle, for how are all these films and many people to be seen, when there is so little time available?

* * *

Of the films fitted into the first week unquestionably the *Drei Groschen Oper* is the most important. The first point that the observer must record, is Pabst's amazing range: *Westfront 1918* was sociological and hard, *Jeanne Ney* was lyrical, this film is dark. Underworld, a word never used throughout the film, is present in every shot. There is not a suggestion of daylight, not in the docks nor the streets not in that tawdry would-be regal procession, which records in six shots the futility of such processions, anywhere in the world. Pabst is becoming a miser over length of scene (not shot); he is for form only and will hardly allow the thought words as it were, so determined is he to make visible the skeleton under the most complex processions of life.

I do not think I have seen anything so corrupt and therefore because no excuse nor alleviation is permitted, so moral. His condemnation beats on the mind as the half light beats on the eyes. Unnecessary to repeat the story, it goes back beyond the English version of *The Beggar's Opera*, to the folk



Types appearing in "The Threepenny Opera," by Pabst. Mr. Casparius, whose work is familiar to "Close Up" readers is going to Canada to make films as well as photos. One of his contracts is with the Canadian Pacific Railway.

Quelques types révélés par "l'Opéra de quat'sous," de G. W. Pabst. Mr. Casparius, dont le travail est si connu des lecteurs de "Close Up," est parti au Canada dans l'intention d'y tourner des films et de prendre des photographies. Il est engagé en outre dans ce but, par la Canadian Pacific Railway.

Typen aus dem Film "Die Dreigroschenoper" von Pabst. Herr Casparius, dessen Schaffen den Lesern des "Close Up" bekannt ist, wird sich nach Canada begeben, um sowohl Filme als auch Photos zu machen. Einer seiner Verträge wird mit der Canadian Pacific Railway abgeschlossen werden.

tales known to every English child, Jonathan Wild, highwaymen, dark streets, rats, beggars and terror. For this reason it was a little disconcerting to find the period shifted a hundred and fifty years in date; to hear typewriter and telephone and to see early Victorian dresses. These details jarred against the stubborn memories of childhood, for the story will be to English people always, a part of the eighteenth century.

Uncompromising material; Pabst has made of Polly an unscrupulous darker sister to Wycherley's Fidelity. Motives are allowed to tangle like the shadows and courage becomes no virtue contrasted with the swarming misery of beggars and of thieves. Yet the film has throughout the beauty of certain effects of fog, or of a street, in itself and by daylight unremarkable, but suddenly lovely seen at night through a railway arch.

Particularly the dock scenes will remain in memory. Nor is there sense that the recording imposed limitations; it would seem as if Pabst were less hampered with sound than without it. The long fluid shots where the city is seen as if through a telescope give a new idea of cinematographical distance. This is not a picture with dialogue or with songs, but simply a complete whole, a film.

English people must not confuse it with *The Beggars' Opera*. The English and German versions are a pole apart; the English was intended always as amusement. The German form is bitterly realistic and applicable to to-day.



Carola Neher in "The Three-penny Opera." A study by Hans Casparius.

Carola Neher dans "l'Opéra de quat'sous." Etude de Hans Casparius.

Carola Neher in "Die Dreigroschenoper." Studie von Hans Casparius.

The name of R. Siodmak, director of *Voruntersuchung*, is well known to readers of *Close Up*, as many photographs from *Mennschen am Sonntag* and an article on the film, appeared in the magazine during the spring of 1930. It will be remembered that he made this film with a couple of friends, and with chiefly non-professional actors. It had a deserved success among intellectual audiences but was less popular in the provinces or in outlying kinos. Its success, however, led to his being given this new sound film to direct for the Ufa, based on the problem of the pre-trial examination of prisoners and its consequent opportunity for "third degree" methods.

The story is quite simple. A student is falsely accused of murder; he is questioned day and night until he finally agrees to confess to anything the police desire so long as they will let him sleep. He has given a key, possession of which might clear him, to a friend, the son of the examiner. The father suspects that his son is implicated and is driven by the torment of this thought to try to force the student into confessing his presumed guilt. Clues lead to the arrest of the friend. Other clues lead to another innocent man. It is only after many days that information from an unexpected quarter leads to the arrest of the man who had actually done the murder.

And the examining officials are left with the knowledge that they had condemned beforehand in their own thought, innocent people who were cleared merely by accidental chance.

It is a well made film with some excellent moments but it has only to be compared with the *Drei Groschen Oper* for the difference in quality to become apparent. There are no undercurrents of motive. It is quite straightforward. But it does not possess the sincerity of say the earlier Russian films, no doubt because the "box office" had to be considered. Just where a scene might pass from mere story to indictment, the tension is weakened, and suggestion of a "happy ending" is brought forward. This is probably not the fault of the director. As far as no doubt as he was allowed he used his material well and did not sacrifice his sense of cinema to sound. There is no reason why this should not be a popular success with English audiences.

What can one write about *Ariane*? It is said to have made more money than most other films this year. It has popular appeal. The technique is appallingly old-fashioned, and one device, that of hearing dialogue whilst watching a blank screen, is repeated over and over in a most tiresome manner. The film depends entirely upon the reaction of the audience to Elizabeth Bergner. And this again depends upon the person being either very simple or an experienced psychological observer. For each of her gestures can be interpreted two ways; simply or as the reflex of an involved psychological process not to be understood unless the key to the language is known. She is the Colette of the screen. The apparent simplicity of the story will please many, a few will be amused at the slight suggestion of parody she contrives for those who understand it, and a great number will be irritated. From a purely cinematographic point of view the film is not important.

"*Ariane.*" A Paul Czinner film with Elizabeth Bergner. Production : Nero-Film.

"*Ariane.*" Film de Paul Czinner avec Elizabeth Bergner. Production : Nero-Film.

"*Ariane.*" Film von Paul Czinner. Elizabeth Bergner als Ariane. Ein Nero-Film.

Photo : Hans Casparius.



There is a sharp division of opinion in Berlin as to the merits of *Das Lied vom Leben*. The film was originally made as the record for some hospital of a Cæsarian operation. It was made with sound and the various directions during the course of the operation are distinctly given. Then for some reason, it was decided to add a story and make it into a symbolic record of marriage and birth.

The film has been condemned on thematic grounds by a certain section of the press, which is absurd, as it is a record of what is happening in the world every hour, countless times. It is a pity that prejudice and almost tribal superstition still persist in possibly the most important event of life; it is not generally recognised for instance that in many countries of Europe matters pertaining to child-birth are left to the least gifted of the medical students and that little incentive is given to research into new methods. So that any film that will arouse public interest is of value educationally for the whole world.

But *Das Lied vom Leben* fails somehow in its treatment. It has become neither a propaganda film for the study of the subject, (one is badly needed) nor is it art. The photography is clear, there are some lovely shots of animals, giraffes feeding and the slow crawling giant tortoises, but the general effect is of an unrelieved cruelty, the sunshine is poor compensation for the insistence upon pain. The director, A. Granovsky, has come to the film from the theatre, and the text and songs are by Walter Mehring, whose plays and poems are fairly well known in England. Because of its subject the film deserves to be seen, but in spite of its earnestness there is a lack of perception, one side only of the problem is shown and the insistence upon surgical instruments is so great that presently the mind fails to record the human side at all. It is probably not possible to mix scientific record and personal reaction, in story form. It is said, of course, that the censor made so many cuts that the original intention of the picture has been entirely altered.

Borderline by Kenneth Macpherson, was given its first German showing at the *Rote Muhle*, at a special midnight performance. The performance began with the screening of a part of Germaine Dulac's film, *The Mussel*. This was described as an experiment in a psycho-analytical film and had moments of great interest. It was however, a pity that the film could not have been shown in its entirety, as occasionally the symbolism was a little difficult to follow. *Borderline*, which created somewhat of a furore, pleased the press and a large section of the audience. A few however objected on political grounds, that if the negro problem were to be presented, it should have been done more directly and with a mass, rather than with a single individual. As a matter of fact, the "negro problem" was not presented as such, so that the objection is not very valid. Others found its deliberate tempo slow. This was probably correct for Berlin, where the rhythm of life is swifter, than anywhere known to me except New York, but it is not true for England, and *Borderline* is an English film and should not be a copy of

German or Russian methods. The press in particular were enthusiastic about the photography and lighting. It will be shown also by film groups in some of the other cities of Germany.

The new sound film by Fritz Lang is announced shortly but I shall have left before it is screened. And I was unable either to see the new Otzep film, which critics here say is excellent. Of the twenty or more pictures I have seen however, unquestionably the *Drei Groschen Oper* is the finest. American talkies have practically disappeared from the German kinos and most programmes are filled now with sound films made in this country.

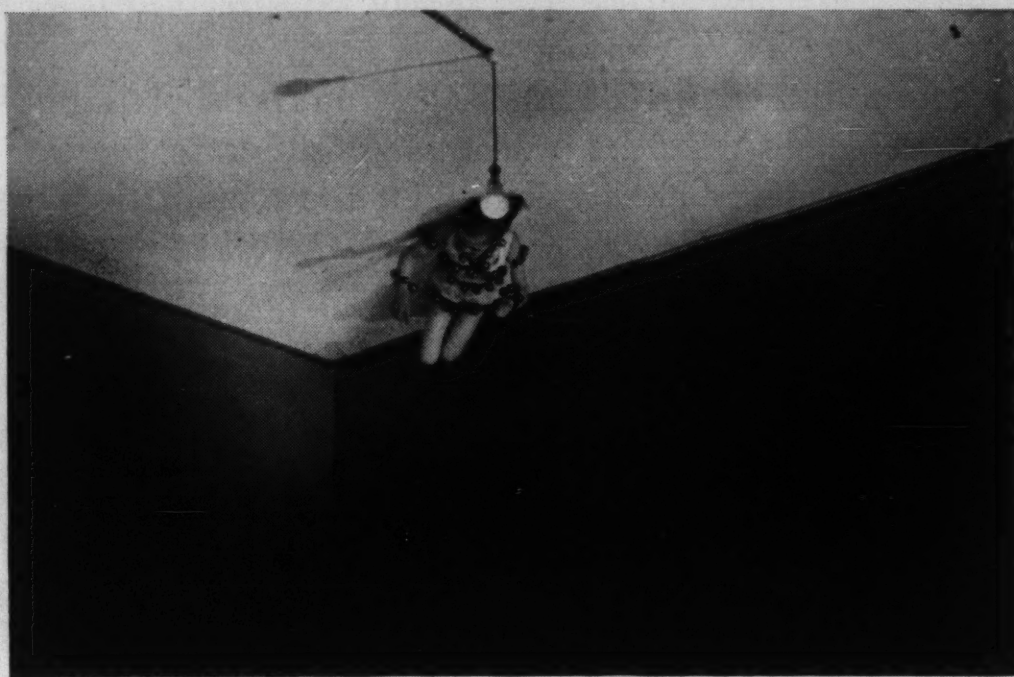
BRYHER.



Charles Dekeukeleire's "White Flame."

"Flamme Blanche," de Charles Dekeukeleire.

Charles Dekeukeleire's "Weisse Flamme."



From "The Poet's Dream," a film by Jean Cocteau.

Photo: Sacha Masour.

"La Rêve du Poète," film de Jean Cocteau.

Photo: Sacha Masour.

Aus "Des Dichters Traum." Ein Film von Jean Cocteau.

Photo: Sacha Masour.

LA RÊVE DU POÈTE

Jean Cocteau: Michel Arnaud: Camera: Périnal.

The poet. The wound on his hand becomes a mouth; a real life mouth in his hand. Semi close-up. Rub left breast, rub right breast . . . left breast. Hand descends. Suggestion. A Czech-film-lust-expression and a . . . star. The female statue then commands: "Enter into the mirror" (souvenir of Heaven in "Orphée") and houi! a synchronised Auric blast and the mirror becomes water.

HE floats away into the Cocteau beyond.

HE arrives at a quaint hotel corridor. Peeps through keyholes. Room 19, a Chinaman. Room 21, little girl learns how to fly, sticks to ceiling and pulls long noses at her professor—cinematic Peterpan. Room 23, the Hermaphrodite's haunt. Outside, a pair of shoes, one male shoe, one female. A couch. BONG (an Auric crash) a foot appears. BONG, another foot. BONG, an arm. BONG, a head. In fact, the being. A little black flap in significant position is lifted to show the words: "DANGER A MORT." Sound technique! At end of corridor HE shoots himself.

Part 3. Boule de Neige. (Enfants Terribles.) Little boy. Killed. Blood, blood, blood! from mouth. A nigger, nearly naked and with wire wings lies on boy. Sound accompaniment: a long buzz on one note. Nigger turns negative to fade completely out. The old house's balconies are the boxes of a theatre. Elegant audience watch HIM and HER playing cards next to little dead boy. "You're lost if you have not the *Ace of Hearts*." The required card is taken from the left hand side of boy. YES, symbol! Nigger hand steals card and HE shoots himself again. A chimney falls to the ground as in Prologue. FIN.

Merely impressions.

* * *

AU PAYS DU SCALP the film taken by the Marquis de Wavrin during his long voyage to the sources of the Amazon, has not at the time of writing been presented.

It is certain however that the Marquis, above all a celebrated explorer and ethnologist, has made a film in which all artifice has been avoided.

The "clou" of the film is the ceremony of the scalp. Whereas in the documentaire *Chez les Mangeurs d'Hommes* one never sees a man being eaten, I feel sure that the scalp scenes in the Marquis' film should be of interest—I have even handled some of the actual scalps which now adorn the Marquis' mantelpiece! The flesh of the victim's face is removed from the

Scalp from the Marquis de Wavrin's film, "The Scalp Country."

"Au Pays du Scalp." Film du Marquis de Wavrin.

Ein Skalp aus dem Film des Marquis de Wavrin "Das Land der Skalpe."





"The Scalp Country," a film made by the Marquis de Wavrin during a voyage to the sources of the Amazon.

"Au Pays du Scalp." Voyage du Marquis de Wavrin aux sources de l'Amazone. Tête humaine réduite.

"Das Land der Skalpe." Dieser Film wurde von dem Marquis de Wavrin während einer Reise zu den Quellen des Amazonas hergestellt.

cranium and is boiled and modelled before the eyes of the victim's wife. It is then filled with hot gravel and white sand. This process repeated regularly for several months causes a gradual shrinking of the tissues. Finally, the curious trophy, reduced to the size of a fist, goes to decorate the murderer's belt. These uncommon decorations are known as Tzan-Tzas.

CHARLES E. STENHOUSE.

QUEEN KELLY AND QUEEN VICTORIA

Stroheim is an Austrian director in Hollywood. There are, we know, numbers of foreign directors in that great capital of the world (excluding Russia), but Stroheim's film life, unlike that of the others, began and still continues there. His work is thus exempt from the unhappy faults of the great uprooted and transplanted. His films give no hint of the stormy conflicts (or rows) we are told he has with his companies.

Stroheim's position being unique, his work is no less so. Impossible to find for it a nationality. In the list of films appended to the Cahier Special of *Le Rouge et Le Noir* devoted to the cinema, he is put among the Germans. This, presumably, because he is "Von" and "Stroheim." Russia, an imaginary Russia, pre-revolutionary with post-revolutionary resources, would probably be a little, if not much, nearer the mark.

However, it is individualist and capitalist Hollywood that has enabled Stroheim, broken loose from national ties, to find expression (though as far, at least, as the audience is concerned, incomplete expression) for his personal visions. At the present day, there is probably no place in the world where he would find himself more free. Can one not say that if there were, Stroheim would have found his way there. Granted that in *Films, Facts and Forecasts* there are attributed to him remarks of a nature calculated to upset the minds of the most ardent of hero-worshippers, romantic or otherwise. They choose to find in them but a natural and pardonable resistance.

Stroheim's officer triumphs over miserably foolish wives and pathetically blind husbands, and in doing so displays (exhibits) every weakness and meanness and cowardice of which a man can be capable. He becomes the man you'll love to hate, and as Stroheim knows what he is about, he is the man whom Stroheim wants you to love to hate. A terrible and violent fate is reserved for the villainous officer, ergo Stroheim is Victorian in his morality, meting out a super-punishment to a super-villain. However, this excessive zeal in blackening his screen incarnation and devising (with what loving care) hideous punishments for him, plus the fact that this same villain is made the central dominating and triumphant personality of the dramas enacted, points to impulses of which the late queen was certainly not aware.

Merry-go-round is perhaps the most frankly brutal film ever made. (The inspiration for this work is plainly Stroheim's, whatever may have been the respective contributions of him and Julian to the production, as to which accounts appear to differ. Incidentally, one may be forgiven for referring here to the report of an interview (!) with Eisenstein in *Film Weekly* (!) of the 25th March, 1929, in which that director is said to have mentioned this film among several American pictures he would not forget. One suspects it was hardly with a desire to show life in the raw that Stroheim regaled his audience with the sight of George Siegmann crushing Mary Philbin's foot beneath his own until the tears ran and followed it up with the cinema's classic rape scene (Siegmann and Philbin) notable for its wholly gratuitous violence and intensification of the antipathetic aspects which any such scene must hold. The film is packed with scenes and incidents of a like nature. Decidedly *Merry-go-round* is pure Stroheim.

Merry Widow (merrily merrily) is described in *The Film Till Now* as "a movie version of a popular musical comedy in the Ruritanian manner, complete with princesses and monocled lieutenants, flashing sabres and pink roses." What you noticed, however, was that it was complete with cripples. In fact, many of the scenes in *Merry Widow* yielded not at all in audacity to those of his other pictures, and doubtless that is why Atkinson (now of the *Daily Telegraph*) once described it, I believe, as "the vilest of all vile films" or in words to that effect. To think that a Lehar operette should have been metamorphosed into a characteristically Stroheim film!

In *Greed*, Stroheim took a tougher, more resisting material, with the result that the signs by which we had learned to recognise his favourite patterns were less evident (the mutilation of the film doubtless contributed to the same end). Nevertheless, *Greed* was Stroheim's master-work, inhuman in its ferocity, *unrealistic* in its elaboration of nightmare. Not a realistic film, with a moral about the worthlessness of money, or an exposition of the disastrous consequences of a particular obsession. Briefly, in turning *Greed*, Stroheim was not setting down a reality which he felt obliged to face, but rather elaborating a personal vision, which haunted him, urged itself imperiously forward, with the results we know. That, in doing so, he should have gone to a story not of his own invention is only to be regretted, as making more complicated the task of approximate valuation.

Wedding March (as we saw it) relaxed a bit. It was more sentimental, but apart from that, the butcher (with all his rhythmic chopping of meat) was but a pale reflection of Siegmann's circus bully, Fay Wray's "innocence" was sophistication compared with that of Mary Philbin. All the same, a reflection is a reflection, isn't it? And there was the scene with Zazu Pitts *limping* down the aisle and you weren't allowed to help noticing it because she limped *all* the way down the aisle. Meanwhile *La Revue du Cinema* (April) publishes a "still" from the second part of the work which repays careful study.

It is said that Stroheim will remake in sound *Blind Husbands* and *Merry-go-round*. And why not? What could be more fitting? The talkies have rendered any excuses for Stroheim not developing, for giving himself over to the work of repetition. People will visit the "new" films with unabated interest.

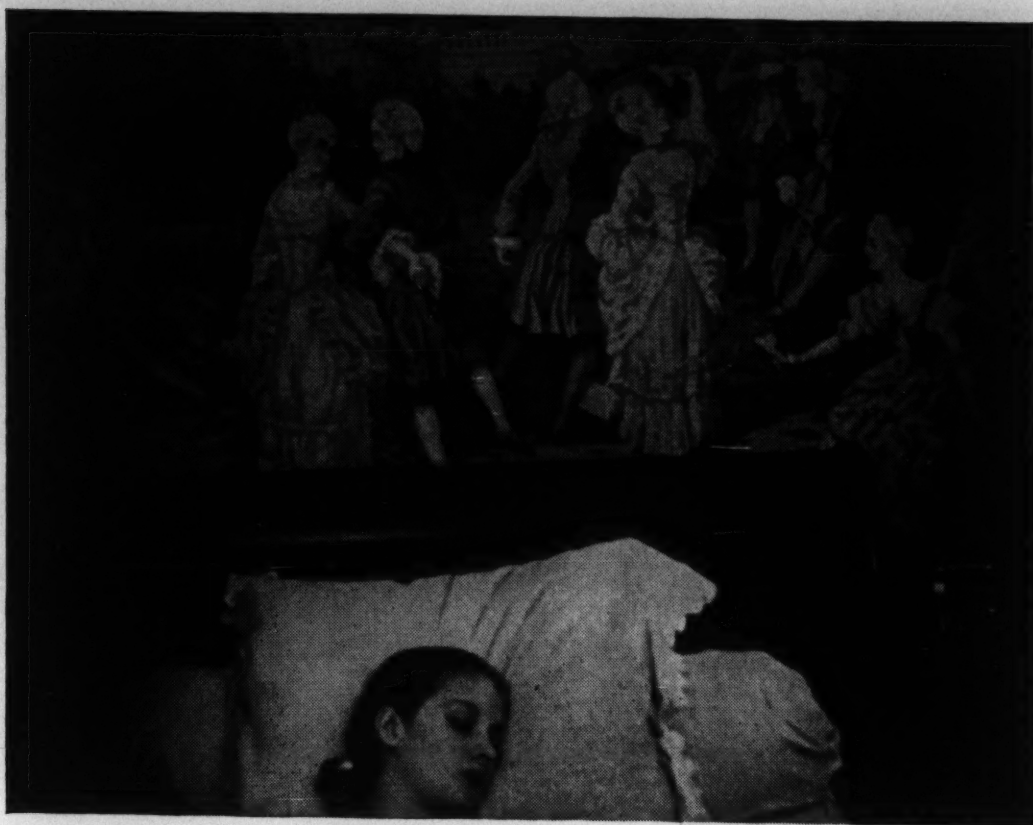
H. A. M.



"Autumn Fire," a short film projecting a tragic love story against a sombre autumnal mood. Directed by Herman Weinberg.

"Lueur d'automne," film d'un court métrage narrant une tragique idylle sur un fond sombre d'automne. Dirigé par Herman Weinberg.

"Herbstfeuer," ein kurzer Film, der düstere Herbststimmung und die tragische Geschichte einer Liebe schildert. Regie: Herman Weinberg.



*Further scenes
from Carl Dreyer's
"Strange
Adventures of
David Gray."*



*Quelques scènes,
encore, des "Et-
ranges Aventures
de David Gray,"
réalisé par Carl
Dreyer.*

*Weitere Szenen
aus Carl Dreyers
"Das seltsame
Erlebnis des
David Grey."*

COMMENT AND REVIEW

SEARCH.

I am a newcomer to the cinema.

Past numbers of *Close Up* conjure up strange names and wonderful films which are now merely memories. I know nothing of such historic films as *Waxworks*, *Doctor Caligari's Cabinet*, *Seventh Heaven*. Paul Leni is but a name to me.

Therefore I live for revivals.

Present talkies mean nothing to me, I am but dimly conscious of the existence of *Hallelujah*, but it is the dim world of the past that entrances me.

And, so, for the sake of others and myself, here is a list of London cinemas which if watched carefully may revive some of these shelved masterpieces.

THE FORUM, (Temple Bar 3931.)
Villiers Street,
Strand.

STRAND CINEMA, (Temple Bar 5061.)
Agar Street,
Strand.

ROYAL, (Western 6044.)
175, Kensington High Street,
Kensington.

NEW GAIETY, (Paddington 5716.)
5, Praed Street,
Paddington, W.2.

GAIETY, (East 4038.)
73, East India Dock Road,
Poplar, E.14.

At the Forum I have seen *Giant Harvest* and *Men of the Woods*. Here also I obtained a publication called the *Kinema Guide*, which will help the seekers after silence.



Saur Ben-Hafid in the Portuguese picture "Nua."

Saur-Ben-Hafid dans le film portugais : "Nua."

Saur Ben-Hafid in dem portugiesischen Film "Nua."

NEWS FROM PORTUGAL.

At Lisbon, a new picture : *Tragédia Rustica* (*Rustic Tragedy*), has just been presented. This is the first Portuguese cultural film, and shows the dangerous effects of the carbuncle.

Of course, *Tragédia Rustica* is not a cinematographic master-piece, but as it is designed for the education of uncultured country men of our villages it deserves all our sympathy.

Side by side with the scientific part of the picture, which is very interesting, a short and ingenious story has been woven around it to create interest, but unfortunately this anecdote has spoiled a little the whole.

Alves da Cunha, a great and well known Portuguese tragical actor of the stage, was the director of this picture and its only performer.

Another Portuguese film has been shown : *Nua* (*Nude*), directed by the French *metteur-en-scène* Maurice Mariaud. It is without any doubt a bad picture. The scenario, the *mise-en-scène*, the acting of nearly all the actors, are wrong and old fashioned. *Nua* has a single merit : the leading-girl, a débutante with natural intuition and valuable qualities, named Saur Ben-Hafid.

Both the pictures, *Tragédia Rustica* and *Nua* are silent.

We expect to see the first Portuguese sound film, *A Severa* by Leitão de Barros, in the first days of June. The expectancy is unsurpassing.

Henrigne Costa is also achieving his historical picture : *A Portuguesa de Napoles* performed by Maria Sol Heloïsa Clara and Antonio Pincheiro.

The sound-cinema has conquered Portugal. Nearly all the picture-palaces in Lisbon, Oporto and Coïmbra are equipped for the new form of the cinematographic art, and many of the other towns are following the example. We see, presently, the best and most recent foreign pictures without any delay. *Le Million* by Clair, for instance, was presented at Lisbon at the same time as it was shown in Paris.

A. C.



Spring in Taiga in "Junghu."
Directed by Litfinoff with Mer-
shin as cameraman.

Le printemps à Taiga, dans
"Junghu." Dirigé par Litfinoff.
Cameraman : Mershin.

Frühling in der Taiga aus
"Junghu." Regie : Litfinoff.
Mershin als Kameramann.

PERSONALLY ABOUT PERCY SMITH.

Lives there a man with eyes so blind that he never has rejoiced to himself that the *Secrets of Nature* are no secret to Miss Mary Field and Mr. Percy Smith. . .

There is a story, related by Miss Field, of the day she consulted Mr. Smith on the most expeditious method of ridding an old hay loft of a certain pest.



The female of the Pug-nosed water-flea-antennae highly developed for swimming. The shell serves as a protection for the eggs (several are visible) and later for the young. This is one of the commonest species of the group. From a "Secrets of Nature" picture by Percy Smith.

La femelle de la mouche d'eau au nez camus merveilleusement constituée pour la natation. Les coquilles protègent d'abord les oeufs (dont plusieurs sont visibles ici) et ensuite les moucheron. C'est là une mouche de l'espèce la plus commune. Documentaire des "Secrets de la Nature," par Percy Smith.

Das Weibchen des kurznasigen Wasserflohs; die hochentwickelten Fühler eignen sich zum Schwimmen. Die Schale schützt die Eier (mehrere sind sichtbar) und später die Jungen. Dies ist eine der gewöhnlichsten Arten dieser Gruppe. Aus dem Film "Geheimnisse der Natur" von Percy Smith.

"If I think anything is a pest," answered Mr. Smith, "I make a film about it; then it becomes beautiful."

And Miss Field felt rebuked as if she had been reproved for talking in church.

The patience and energy of Mr. Smith are so extraordinary that few can hope to take them as criteria. When he was a child, this ardent nature lover crept from his home, after safely being kissed good-night, in order to study the habits of spiders in the marshes. Morning found him literally frozen to the ground. He remembers how astonished he was when he tried to return home and found that he could not move!

It is the same undaunted spirit which has produced the *Secrets of Nature* in the wee garden-conservatory-studio at Southgate.

Mr. Smith uses oxy-acetylene for lighting his microscopic studies. At first, he used to prepare his own gas cylinders; however, he discovered that he was getting air mixed with the acetylene and, being rather worried, he asked a friend the explosive values of the mixture.

"What unit," cried the friend, "do you want me to work in—rows of houses!"

But ever the tireless Mr. Smith persisted. Often, he has wired in triumph to his colleagues at Welwyn, "Got it the forty second time!"

It sounds a little like D. W. Griffith!

A complicating factor in the life of Mr. Smith is that his pictures are constantly disclosing slight misjudgments of men of science; a fact which does not please the learned men mightily or make the scripting of the picture easier. After *The Frog*, Mr. Smith wrote to the greatest authority on the subject in England to ask him why tadpoles pause before leaving the jelly-like substance which holds them as black specks. Back came the answer, "Tadpoles *do not pause*." With a faint smile, Mr. Smith invited the emphatic professor to witness his film of tadpoles pausing.

"I think," he suggested quietly, "they just want a rest."

Frequently, too, there is little authoritative literature covering subjects treated in the *Secrets*. For instance, tomes have been written on how to kill the garden pest known as the Dodder, but, for *The Strangler*, the harassed director wanted to germinate it!

"I started in films," Mr. Smith once confessed to me, "because I took a photograph of a bluebottle's tongue: I tied the little beggar up and fed him with the tip of a needle. Some friends showed my picture to a producer. He was so delighted that he gave me a camera, some film stock and told me to go out and do my best. The camera worked at f.6. and, as the tripod was rigid, holes had to be dug in the ground if a close up of an insect was to be secured! But, if you don't copy other people's methods, or if you can't, you get new ideas. Accepted societies for research use the same terms, standardise their thoughts. I feel that, if I had money, I should go to the talkies more often and do less work. If I had spent more than ten and six

on my lathe I am sure that I would have sent out complicated work to be done by trained instrument makers."

"What," I had demanded, "did you do before capturing the blue-bottle?"

"For fifteen years I worked in a government office. I spent my lunch hours reading in the British Museum and my spare time in suggesting labour-saving devices."

"How," with a flash of intuition, "they must have hated you!"

"All for twenty five shillings a week! The worst job was the endless copying out of a certain form. I smeared some paste round a cocoa tin, borrowed a roll of a particular kind of thin paper and reproduced hundreds of forms by dropping the roll down a lift shaft! Still, I lived to be thankful for the methods of a government office. During the war I was an official photographer. Only the fact that an order arrived an hour late saved me from being blown up, by a phosphorous shell, with the rest of the crew of a certain cruiser. On one occasion an aeroplane charged right into my lens. The red hats wanted to know why my photographic document did not show what happened *afterwards*. Oh! I've learnt my lesson! When the Educational Board came to watch a demonstration of my work they filed in stiffly, the most important at the head of the procession, and, automatically, stood in a semicircle. I knew that I had to address my remarks to the man at the top!"

Apart from his genius and his humour, there is a tender side to Mr. Smith's nature. Miss Field told me that she considered it a most touching sight to watch Mr. Smith and his assistant covering up tiny plants with blankets for the night!

APPENDIX.—Miss Field works at the British Instructional Studios, not at Southgate. Her job is to edit Mr. Smith's pictures and to write the dialogue.

"My effects depend," she said to me, "on perfect synchronisation. I have rehearsed with *my voice* till I know exactly how long he takes to utter a phrase. I don't allow him to do more than take his cues from the screen while he is recording; if he tried to follow the screen he would put emphasis on the wrong words."

"The music is specially composed. And we do German and French versions. Patriots may be glad to learn that I have proved, by painfully cutting negative, that the legends about French and German being more precise languages than English are basely false."

"And speech has made all the difference to the commercial success of the series. But let me tell you of our first effort at talking. . . For days we rehearsed! Our idea was—this is to be the best we can give; therefore, we put a brand new lamp in the recording apparatus. The report came from the laboratory that—there was nothing on the sound negative! Again we tried. Nothing! Expenses mounting: the orchestra losing patience.

Finally, late in the night, we discovered that the new lamp had not been screwed right home! But imagine those hours of waiting!"

O. B.



From "The Dodder," a British Instructional "Secrets of Nature," produced by Percy Smith.

Photo tirée de "The Dodder" film éducatif de la Série des "Secrets de la Nature" éditée par Percy Smith.

Cuscuta "The Dodder." Aus dem British Instructional film "Geheimnisse der Natur," hergestellt von Percy Smith.

A NEW STAR.

There are not many actresses who can stand in a set and look as if they had a right to be there. Most of them have no idea "how to put up a show." Asta Nielsen, Greta Garbo, Catherine Hessling, Valeska Gert: these are among the magnificent and now . . . Dorrie Dene.

Dorrie has come to the screen through the music hall. In the music hall there is a quality of light on the face that is never found in pictures. Dorrie can stand in that light and look the centre of things. She is a performer in every best sense of the word. Push some of the blondes of the screen under the lights of the music hall and see how long they can hold an audience! Dorrie has a superb "audience-projection" whether in music hall or cinema. And Dorrie has a voice.

"I was trained for opera but I didn't let that trouble me. I took engagements on the halls where I could find an outlet for my sense of fun. In those days, I was slimmer than I am now and people used to speculate on whether I was a man or a woman. It was my deep voice which confused them!"

Dorrie's eyes sparkle when she tells a story against herself. She loves making herself ridiculous, and audiences, all over the country, love her for doing it.

"As a fan," I told her, "I find it great news; as a journalist, I am compelled to admit the fact that you love your public is not terribly good copy."

"But," she protested, "it's a terribly good public. I remember two sweet but prim old ladies who engaged a box for a week of matinées while I was playing the Alhambra. At the end of the week they came round to see me. However, I was dreadfully busy and was forced to send my pianist to see them. 'How is Miss Dene?' they asked anxiously. 'Well,' Reggie answered, 'to tell you the truth she is very angry at being second turn.' 'Still,' sympathised the old dames, 'she can't always expect to be first!'"

"Some of my fans are worried because I am built for comfort not for speed. Kind people often write to warn me that the prop roller I use in my act is deceiving me and that I ought to try some other cure. Why, when I was touring in South Africa I allowed myself to be used as a side show at a charity bazaar—Dutch farmers had to guess my weight. Goodness! ever heard the Chinese National Anthem?"

But have we a British producer to make just that kind of film?

O. B.

G. F. Noxon, the editor of the Cambridge review *Experiment*, is making a short film on Cambridge life for B.I.F. and Wardours. The title is yet unsettled. Mr. Noxon is being assisted by Stuart Legg.

PARAGRAPH APPEALING FOR DR. BARNARDO'S HOMES.

We are asked by Mr. Basil Johnson, Mill Corner, Marsham Way, Gerrard's Cross, for information concerning any theatres or halls with projectors, to hold from 200 to 2,000, within 150 miles of London, which he wishes to hire for one night this year (NOT Sundays) to give an All-Sporting Show. Every penny taken at the Show goes direct to Dr. Barnardo's Homes. Will those knowing of such accommodation please communicate direct with Mr. Johnson.

"CIMMARON."

Cimmaron is America's greatest contribution to the screen since the talkies began. Did you read Edna Ferber's book? If so you could envisage it as a film. Here was an epic story, so immense in its sweep that it cried out for film treatment. A living, dynamic drama as big as the world itself.

History in the making. Yancey Cravat the pioneer. Indian blood in his veins, first in the Oklahoma land rush, first in the Cherokee strip stampede. A dreamer, quoting Milton. A man of action, denouncing in flaming editorials the Government that robbed the Indians of their birthright. A social rebel, fighting the political corruption of his time. His bitter hatred of social injustice and hypocrisy. His melodramatic defence of Dixie Lee, scourging the puritans with just that necessary touch of exaggerated sentimentality. The killing of the "Kid," last of the great outlaws, and his wife's indignation when he returns the rewards heaped upon him. "I did not kill him for that."

The frenzied land rush on the Oklahoma territory. April 22nd, 1889. Free land. Two million acres of it. Settlers, adventurers, pioneers from all America, waiting for the starting signal. In waggons, on horseback, on foot and even on bicycles, a roaring stampede of humanity. A new town, a new state, a new country in twenty-four hours.

And as the reels of celluloid unfold, we watch Oklahoma grow throughout the years. Law and Order, respectable citizenship, skyscrapers, automobiles, chambers of commerce and Sabre Cravat elected to Congress. And through it all moves Yancey, ever restless, ever pioneering, ever fighting graft, ever defending the Indians until at last he dies in a manner typical of the man, killed while trying to save his comrades in an oil field disaster.

For two hours the film runs on. Not a foot of it can be cut. From the opening land rush sequence to the final fade-out on Yancey's statue immortalising in bronze the living flesh and blood, *Cimmaron* holds us.

One does not look for technical imperfections in Wesley Ruggles' film. They are there, but what does it matter? America has made a great film, great in theme, great in conception. It will not please those comfortable people who gathered at the trade show and tittered every time some demand was made on their intelligence—the people who applauded vigorously when British Movietone at 11.30 p.m. showed them coming into the theatre at 8.30 p.m. How quaint that a man who pioneers should refuse his share of the money graft and the political graft that follows. "Quite impossible, my dear!"

No, *Cimmaron* is not for them. Which, perhaps, is the best possible justification for *Cimmaron*.

R. BOND.

ACHTUNG AUSTRALIEN!

ACHTUNG ASIEN!

A Documentary Film by Colin Ross.

Space without People—people without space, this is the leading thought and subtitle of the film, turned by Colin Ross on his trip to Australia, China, India, and New Zealand, which he undertook accompanied by his family. First to Australia: Cities on the coast, towns such as they are in America, skyscrapers, city-traffic. But it is not the towns, in which the explorer is mostly interested—a few flashes merely—and we already see the big old Motor-car, overloaded with luggage, which is going to lead them to the centre of the continent, right through from South to North. What strikes you most, is the absolute lack of human inhabitants; the car drives for miles without meeting any traces of people. Only once before reaching the coast they meet nomadic tribes, who receive them with a solemn dance, which we do not only see, but hear—as they synchronized it in Berlin, months later.

From Australia the explorer leads us to China, and that is perhaps the best part of the film, strong and convincing in the consequent execution of the Idea: people without space. The earth is not large enough to carry the crowds, so the towns must extend over the surface of the water. Hundreds of boats, one close by the other with clusters of human creatures hanging on them, Kulis, children doing their hard work for the scanty needs of their primitive lives.

And on it goes to India. The river, the burning of the dead, palaces, temples, Gandhi speaking, the little son of Mr. Ross riding on elephants—that's nearly all! The pictures are so beautiful, that one sometimes feels inclined to say "Not so quick, we want to see more of that," but the variety of what is shown to us in this film is so great, that a few glimpses must be enough within this frame.

The following shots are taken on islands in the South Sea, Papuas, canoes, lake dwellings, interesting from the ethnographical standpoints. And here also—as in the scene of the aborigines in Australia—we do not only see them dancing and talking, we hear them. And unfortunately we do not hear them, but someone talking in Europe. We were told by someone who had actually been in those regions and knows the aborigines, that the sound produced by them is quite different from the sounds synchronized. Now I'll leave it to you to judge, whether sound film is really an advantage in this case.

The last station of this journey is New Zealand, the country of geological wonders and contrast, with its steaming, bubbling geysers and vast glaciers.

It has already been said that this document was turned as a silent film and that it was synchronised later. It was synchronised mainly with a

lecture which Colin Ross himself delivered on the different subjects we see. Colin Ross has an agreeable voice, and presents his information in a nice, often humorous way. We hear things from him which the silent film alone would not be able to teach us. But if we look at the film from the artistic point of view, it is very doubtful whether the effect has not been diminished by the accompanying words. And besides it must not be forgotten that nowadays listening to a long coherent speech in a sound film means still a strain.

The little son of Colin Ross is certainly endearing, and it is amusing to hear him say his jolly words. But by these shots the film somehow becomes the record of a family excursion, which interferes with the planned intention of showing the geopolitical tensions of space and people.

TRUDE WEISS.

WRITTEN ON SEEING PROOFS.

The second volume of PHOTOGRAPHIE published by Arts et Metiers Graphiques, Paris.

The Successful system of spiral binding is maintained and the covers and wire are conveniently thicker.

Munkacsi is the big name this year. Note his field at the bottom of a page with clouds covering the rest of the page. You cannot miss his actuality snaps of the motor-cyclist piercing mud, or the footballer landing on his head. Nor the niggers bathing.

Anne Biermann is represented by the feet of the Pantheon and white flowers. Zuber's linen on a line balances his bridge and Outerbridge's cone and eggs was originally called *Hermaphrodite*. The composition of Umbo's *Plage* is interestingly annoying, whereas his houses at night appear like a cascade. There are two pages of Beaton, but Havinden's *Sand* is *not at all* out of place. The churchy interior of Von Bucowitch is a curious contrast to the astonishing long light effect of Kertesz. Tabard has a road in negative, and also a wheel; he showed a wheel last year too. Parry's theme this year is rubber gloves. Finsler has played prettily with cake papers, and the woman leaning forward is certainly one of Steichen's most powerful, but Bayer's *Baby* is not his best. Effective is *Grass* by Landau . . . though Munkacsi remains the name. "Toute la bande" have taken photos of the same model and once again Laure Albin-Guillot (if included) does not excel. There are other and others, and even others that one should mention. On the whole a tone of more sobriety. There is *no* preface by Waldemar George.

CHARLES E. STENHOUSE.

A PLAN FOR FILM SOCIETIES.

I wish to propose a plan by which I think it may become possible for the smaller Film Societies in this country to see the best films produced abroad which so often never come to England. (*Pandora's Box* is an example which comes to mind.) Hitherto it has been quite impossible for most societies even to dream of importing films from abroad because of the immense expenditure involved. Customs duties alone usually, I believe, come to between £30 and £40, and the other expenses would come to quite as much again. This is, of course, too much for any one society to pay (for the purposes of this article I am excluding The Film Society). But if this amount was divided up among a dozen or more societies it would be a different matter.

I therefore wish to suggest that the smaller film societies should occasionally join together to import some out-standing film from the continent. The officers of the Oxford University Film Society would be willing to undertake the business of importation and distribution.

I had formed this plan before reading Mr. Duckworth's article in the March *Close Up*, and I would like to set at rest the minds of anxious treasurers by saying that there would be no need for any preliminary donation. The total expenditure necessary on any one film would be ascertained before any further steps were taken, and the sum would be divided proportionately among the societies taking part in the scheme, a society of thirty members paying, of course, considerably less than a society of three hundred. This does not pretend to be more than a draft scheme, and there are doubtless many difficulties in the way which I have not thought of. Here are some which have occurred to me:

1. Retitling. It seems to me that this would usually be unnecessary; most people have some small knowledge of French and German at least.
2. The length of time the films would have to be in this country and the extra expense involved. This could only be settled by negotiation with the foreign renters.
3. Talking Films. Soon there will be no silent films worth importing. Perhaps this difficulty could be got over by the members of those societies which show their films on private premises becoming honorary members of the nearest society using a cinema equipped with Talking apparatus.

If enough societies take part I do not see why this scheme should not be a success. Will those who are interested communicate with me at Merton College, Oxford.

HUGH CARLETON GREENE.

(President Oxford University Film Society.)

The International Review of Educational Cinematography contains an interesting series of articles in its May issue, of which the following is a synopsis :

Reports to the Council of the League of Nations on the work of the International Educational Cinematographic Institute by Sig. GRANDI, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Dr. KRUSS.

A. EHRLER—Cinematographic technique and school films.

L. M. BAILEY The 16 mm. film and labour rationalisation.

G. T. HANKIN—The cinema and education in international politics.

F. JUER-MARBACH—Language-teaching and the spoken film : Grammar.

A. KOPETZKY—Cinema, opidiascope and the rationalisation of teaching.

L. CIMATTI—A cinema enquiry among 2,800 Piedmontese schoolchildren.

Mrs. ALLEN ABBOTT—School test on " The Thief of Bagdad " (concluded).

THE INSTITUTE'S ENQUIRIES : Teachers and the cinema.

F. HOFFMANN—Practical teaching by sound film.

INFORMATION.

HERE AND THERE.

Readers may obtain this Review from the International Cinematographic Institute, via Lazzaro Spallanzani, I-A, Rome, published in the five official languages of the Institute : English, Italian, French, German and Spanish.

SILHOUETTE FILMS

The silhouette films of Madame Lotte Reiniger are well known in England, though more use might be made of them on purely educational programmes. It is a pity that any child should miss the delightful lions from the Dr. Dolittle film, or the donkey in her present picture. To be invited as I was, to her studio to watch her actually at work, was to repeat in an adult world, the excitement a child experiences, when taken for a rare and long expected visit to the Zoo.

First of all I was allowed to play with the donkey, a wonderful beast cut out of black paper who careered at will across the flat glass table. The heroine was mislaid but there were three robbers, quite unmistakable robbers, a maid with an audacious nose and behind on another table, several fabulous landscapes. A tree moved, the donkey kicked, and above the table there was a camera to record the story, when the moment came and the heroine was found again. But I was not surprised to be told that Madame Reiniger had made her first films near a school, where children rushed between classes into her studio, to see each day " what had happened next."

But what amazing patience and sureness of conception are behind this story. It is so easy in theory to think of children crowding into a workroom, and so very different when it really happens, for the average child is apt to pull to pieces or destroy the very object of most interest to it.

There was a sketch book on another table that contained a rough drawing for every scene in the film in process of construction. Desire to arrange and re-arrange the silhouettes is not allowed to break the creative form of the picture in any haphazard way. First the sense of reality must be established, Madame Reiniger told me, and only afterwards is it possible to pass over into a purely fantastic world. The completely untrue story presents no interest.

The film upon which she is working at present is a second one in the series taken from the *Commedia delle Arte*. Many readers of *Close Up* will remember the first one, *Ten Minutes with Mozart*, that was shown by the London Film Society last December. It will have a sound accompaniment of course and it is hoped it will be ready in early summer. From the silhouettes and drawings that I saw, it should certainly be most successful.

NOTICE TO READERS AND CONTRIBUTORS.

We are anxious to help readers who require information, but before writing to us, please read the following paragraphs, as we cannot answer letters dealing with these subjects.

We are not allowed to sell photographs which have appeared in *Close Up*. Readers desirous of obtaining actual photographs should apply direct to the firms owning the films. The name of firm or director is printed usually underneath the picture. Addresses of film companies are to be found most easily in the *Kinematographic Year Book*. (Your local cinema will probably have a copy.)

We cannot recommend any reliable film school nor can we advise readers as to the best way of obtaining employment in a studio. There is the State School of cinematography in Moscow but it is very difficult for foreigners to enter it. Readers who wish to work in films are advised to perfect themselves as far as possible in some technical branch *before* trying to obtain a position.

We cannot advise as to whether names selected for fictitious film stars in stories written by readers would involve the author in libel proceedings or not.

For particulars of The London Workers and affiliated Film Societies, apply to R. Bond, 5, Denmark Street, London, W.C.1.

We read carefully all manuscripts sent to us. We cannot be responsible for them though we will endeavour to return those not suitable if a stamped addressed envelope be enclosed. International postage stamps can be obtained at any post office. But we would like to point out, to obviate disappointment, that our space is restricted and that we have many reports to print supplied to us by our foreign correspondents. Therefore it is seldom possible to print more than one outside article in each issue. We do not wish to discourage authors and wish we had more space to print many of the excellent articles we receive. But before we can increase the number of our pages we must double the number of our readers.

Otherwise we will endeavour to answer all reasonable requests provided that a stamped, self addressed envelope be enclosed in the letter.

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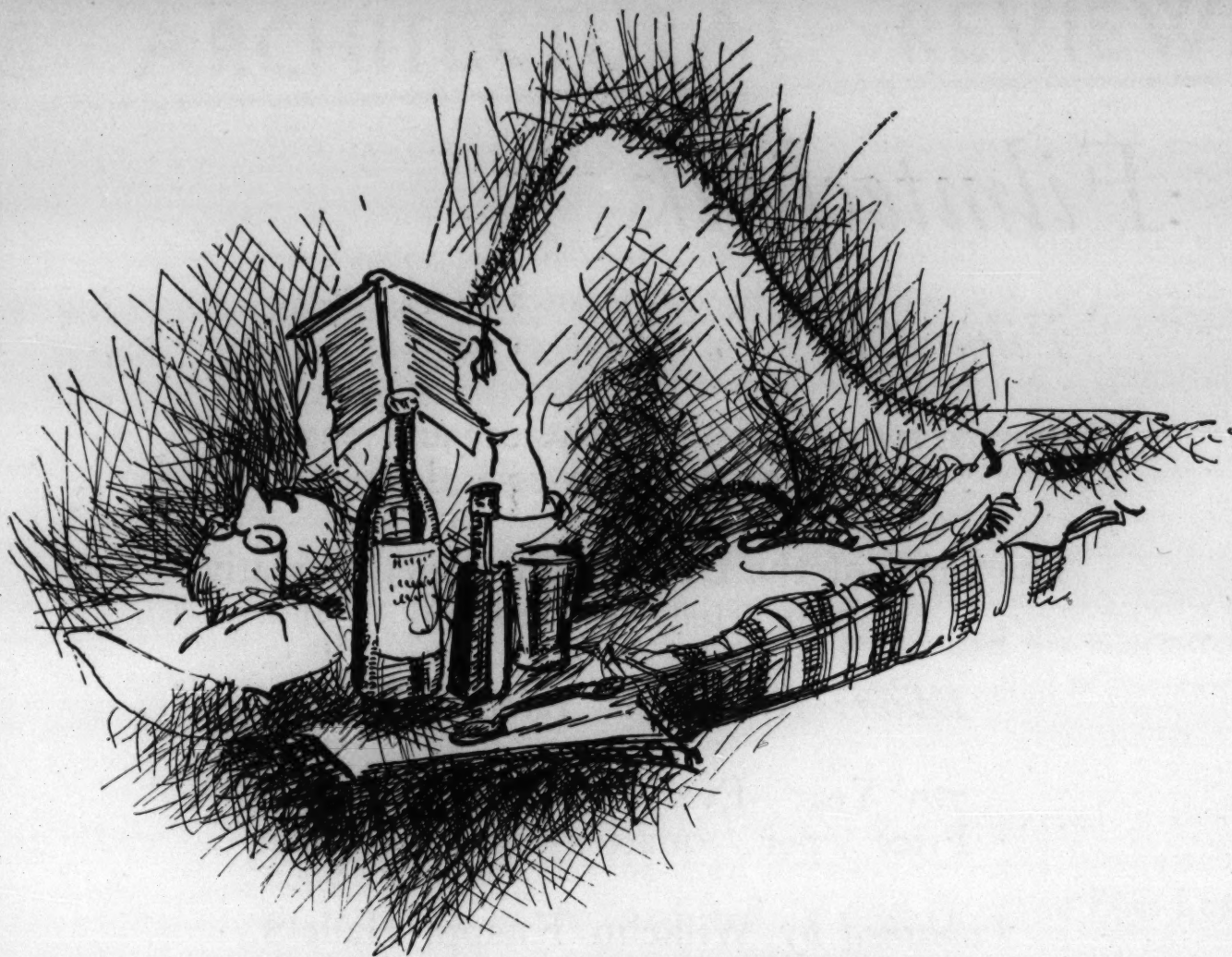
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Only at night when your chest is no longer sore and you feel you cannot sleep any longer, you get restless at cinema time and wish you were sitting in your usual seat, waiting for the lights to snap out and the other side of the world to blot responsibilities (shall I do this—ought I to do that) from the mind.

But you will have to catch the early bus in the morning if you are well enough to go out to-night.

If you cannot go to the movies let the cinema come to you. Why not read a cinematographic book, or what was happening to the films three years ago? If you liked *Jeanne Ney* you will probably like *Gaunt Island*. If you liked *The End of St. Petersburg* why not try *Civilians*? If you prefer . . . there is *Extra Passenger*. Or there are the bound volumes of *Close Up*.

What was happening in 1928, when talkies were not even on the horizon? When did television begin to disquiet the market? Or if your eyes feel too heavy to read why not turn over the photographs in *Close Up* or look at the stills published in *Film Problems*?

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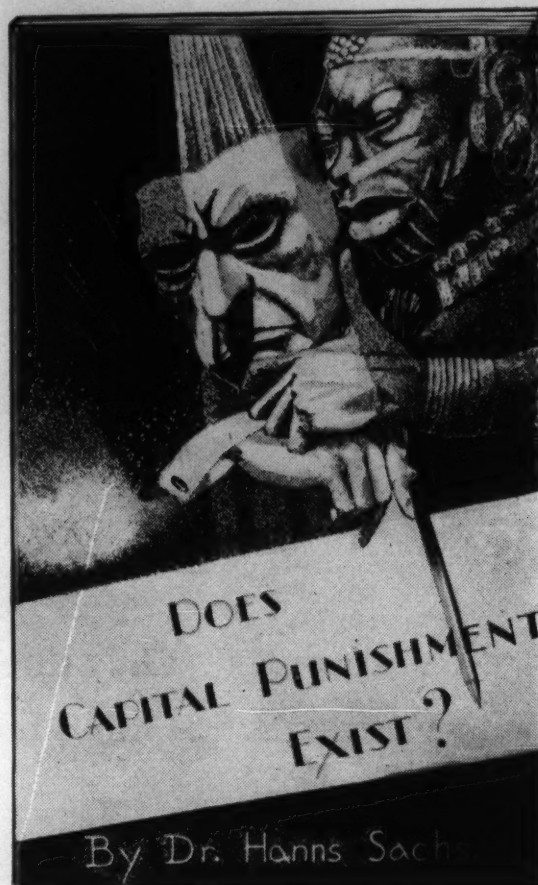
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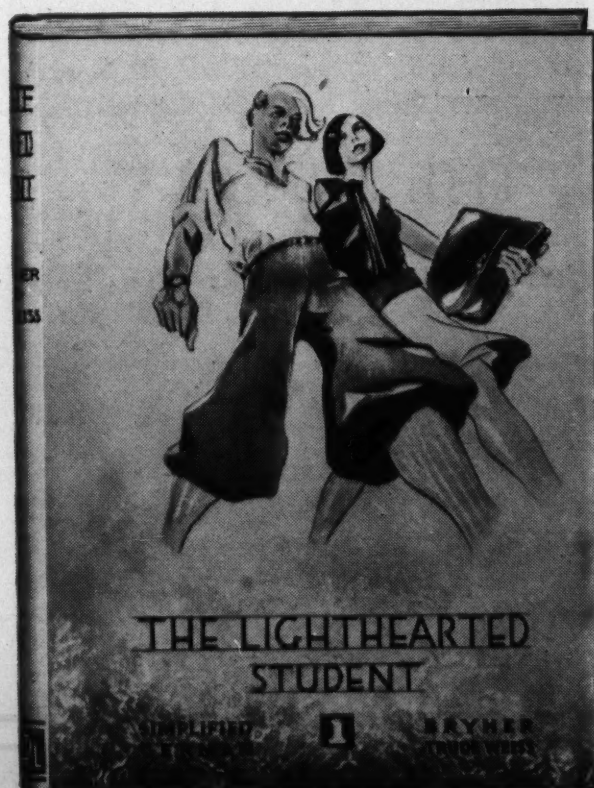
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The Price of Volume VIII (covering the entire year) will be one guinea: postage sixpence.

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